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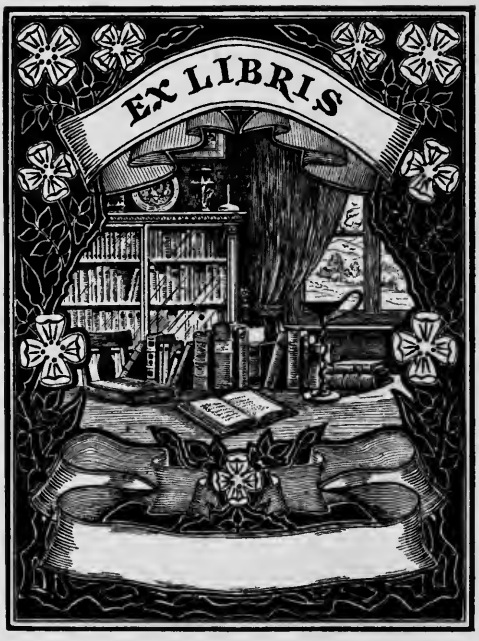
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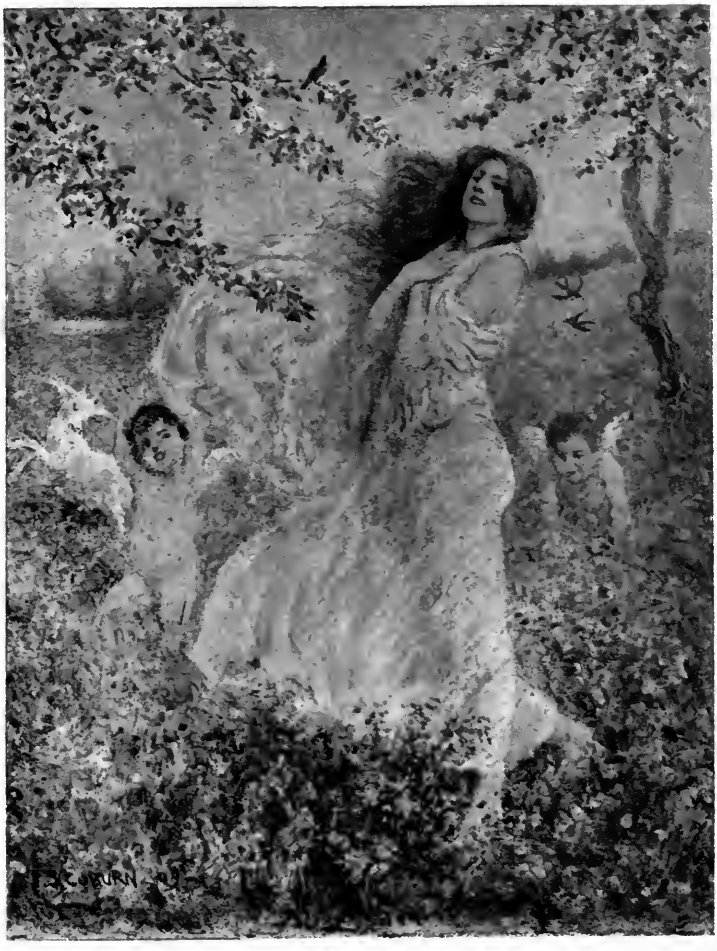

THE WORKS
OF
ALFRED
LORD TENNYSON

CENTENARY EDITION

ILLUSTRATED

G·P·PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

Poet-Laureate Edition

The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson

With a Preface by

Elisabeth Luther Cary

Together with Various Critical Introductions

Illustrated in Photogravure from Original Designs by

Frederick Simpson Coburn

and

Gustave Doré

In Eight Volumes

⑥

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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. . . Fifty years ago,
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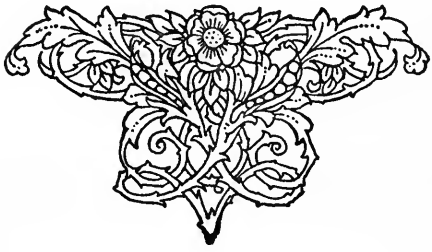


Ballads

and Other Poems

To Alfred Tennyson

My Grandson

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.
Mayst thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

The First Quarrel

(In the Isle of Wight)

I

"WAIT a little," you say, "you are sure it 'll all come right,"
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white;
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I had n't to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no, you are doing me wrong!
Harry and I were married; the boy can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I 'll tell you the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife;
I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain—he made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I had but to look in his face.

III

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years;
I walk'd with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.

The First Quarrel

The boat was beginning to move, we heard them a-ringing the bell,
" I 'll never love any but you, God bless you, my own little Nell."

IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an' he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry; the girl was the most to blame.

V

And years went over till I that was little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, " Our Nelly 's the flower of 'em all."
I did n't take heed o' *them*, but I taught myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when Harry came home for good.

VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields, " I 'll never love any but you; "

The First Quarrel

"I 'll never love any but you," the morning song of
the lark;
"I 'll never love any but you," the nightingale's hymn
in the dark.

VII

And Harry came home at last, but he look'd at me
sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so many years had
gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—that I might ha'
forgot him somehow—
For he thought—there were other lads—he was fear'd
to look at me now.

VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we were married o'
Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all as merry as
May—
Those were the pleasant times, my house an' my man
were my pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel a-sailing with
wind an' tide.

IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho' he tried the vil-
lages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see if work could be
found;

An' he wrote: "I ha' six weeks' work, little wife, so far as I know;
I 'll come for an hour to-morrow, an' kiss you before I go."

x

So I set to righting the house, for was n't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand in a hornets' nest.

xi

"Sweetheart,"—this was the letter—this was the letter I read—
"You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was dead—
Did n't you kiss me an' promise? you have n't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away, an' I wish that I had."

xii

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant times that had past,
Before I quarrell'd with Harry—*my* quarrel—the first an' the last.

The First Quarrel

XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove
me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as simple as any child,
"What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single
life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;
An' *she* was n't one o' the worst." "Then," I said,
"I 'm none o' the best."
An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my love? Come,
come, little wife, let it rest!
The man is n't like the woman, no need to make such a
stir."
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said, "You were
keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as
before."
An' he did n't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me
more and more.
Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, "Let by-
gones be!"
"Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I said, "when you
married me!
By-gones ma' be come-agains: an' *she*—in her shame
an' her sin—
You 'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!
You 'll make her its second mother! I hate her—an'
I hate you!"

The First Quarrel

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me
black an' blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so
crazy wi' spite,
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right."

XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him,
an' when he came in
I felt that my heart was hard; he was all wet thro' to
the skin,
An' I never said, "Off wi' the wet," I never said, "On
wi' the dry,"
So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid
me good-bye.
"You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that is n't
true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit—you 'll kiss me before I
go?"

XV

"Going! you 're going to her—kiss her—if you will,"
I said—
I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light
i' my head—
"I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!"—I did n't know
well what I meant,
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turned *his* face
an' he went.

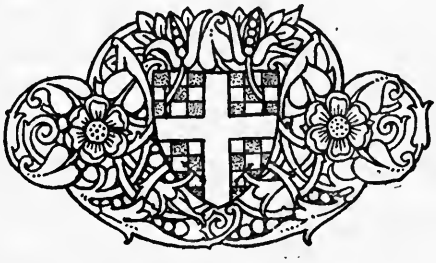
The First Quarrel

XVI

And then he sent me a letter, "I 've gotten my work to do;
You would n't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat."

XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.
"Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right"—
An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.



Rizpah

17—

I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out to me!"
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the
creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself
drenched with the rain.

III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to
fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones,
I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as
a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so
must it lie.

IV

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what
have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a
word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their
spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to
darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you*
know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost
and the fright?

I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your way.

VI

Nay—for it 's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child—
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and could n't be idle—my Willy—he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates and they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;

And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—"I 'll none of it," said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had always borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—is n't that enough shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and hang'd him there.

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. "O mother!" I heard him cry.

I could n't get back tho' I tried, he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

X

Then since I could n't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!" he call'd in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I could n't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will.

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laughed and had cried—
Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd
'em, I buried em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the church-
yard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judg-
ment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy
ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up—they would hang him
again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—let all that
be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's goodwill
toward men—
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord"—let me
hear it again:
"Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering."
Yes, O, yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour
lives but to bless.
He 'll never put on the black cap except for the worst
of the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—
and the last may be first.

Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation—it 's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means me I 'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

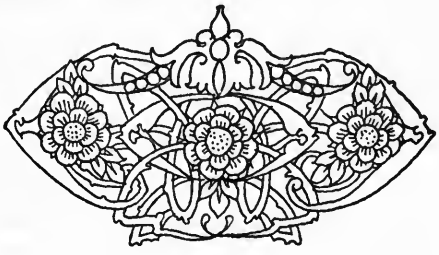
And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire—
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

Rizpah

I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may
leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as
a stone.

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to
be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice
in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call
in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from
the gibbet—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking
the walls—
Willy—the moon 's in a cloud——Good-night. I am
going. He calls.



The Northern Cobbler

I

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur thou mun a' sights [1] to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha sa 'arty an' well.
" Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a vartical soon [2] ! "
Strange fur to goä fur to think what saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;
" Summat to drink—sa' 'ot? " I 'a nowt but Adam's wine:
What 's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to the 'eät o' the line?

[1] The vowels *aï*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craïïn'*, *daïïn'*, *whaï*, *aï* (*I*), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

[2] The *oo* short, as in " wood."

The Northern Cobbler

II

"What 's i' tha bottle a-stanning theer?" I 'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun goä fur it down to the inn.
Naäy—fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw tha was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle theer, an' I 'll tell tha why.

III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when wur it ? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well as a fiddle i' tune.
I could fettle and clump owd booöts and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the babby wur burn, and then I taäkes to the drink.

IV

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw I be hafe shaämed on it now,
We could sing a good song at the Plow, we could sing a good song at the Plow;

The Northern Cobbler

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd an' hurted my huck,[1]
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes slaäpe down i' the squad an' the muck:
An' once I fowt wi' the taäilor—not hafe ov a man, my lad—
Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-banger,[2] an' raäted ma, " Sottin' thy braäins
Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an' hawmin'[3] about i' the laänes,
Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not touch thy 'at to the Squire; "
An' I looöked cock-eyed at my noäse an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,
Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

V

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks cloäths' to keep the wolf fro' the door,
Eh, but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,

[1] Hip.
[2] Scold.
[3] Lounging.

The Northern Cobbler

Fur I fun', when er' back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's
owd stockin' wur 'id,
An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it
o' liquor, I did.

VI

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at
a faäir,
An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and teärin'
'er aäir,
An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I 'd
breäk ivry stick
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the
babby beäl'd,[1]
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal beäst
o' the feäld.

VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our
Sally went laämed
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful
ashaämed;
An' Sally wur sloomy[2] an' draggle-taäil'd in an owd
turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wurn't wesh'd, an' the ole 'ouse
hupside down.

[1] Bellowed, cried out.
[2] Sluggish, out of spirits.

VIII

An' then I minded our Sally, sa pratty an' neät an' sweeät,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to feeät:
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at murn,
Could n't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a sparkle o' fire.
"Does n't tha see 'im?" she axes, "fur I can see 'im;" an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
An' I says, "I mun gie tha a kiss," an' Sally says, "Noä, thou moänt,"
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally says, "Doänt!"

IX

An' when we coom'd into meeätin', at fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither like birds on a beugh;

An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' hell-fire an' the loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' hell-fire—thaw theer 's naw drinkin' i' hell;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as afoor.

XI

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blubber'd awaäy o' the bed—
"Weänt niver do it naw moor;" an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
"I 'll upowd it[1] tha weänt; thou 'rt like the rest o' the men,
Thou 'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it ageän.
Theer 's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha 'll foller 'im slick into hell."

[1] I 'll uphold it.

XII

"Naäy," says I, "fur I weänt goä sniffin' about the tap."
" Weänt tha? " she says, an' mysen I thowt i' mysen
"mayhap."
" Noä:" an' I started awaäy like a shot, an' down to
the hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer, yon big
black bottle o' gin.

XIII

" That caps owt," [1] says Sally, an' saw she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to 'er, " Sally,"
says I,
" Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord an' the power
ov 'is graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I 'll looök my hennemy straäit i'
the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e 's the divil's'
oän sen."

XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, could n't do naw work
an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an' poonch'd my 'and
wi' the hawl,

[1] That 's beyond everything.

But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sattled 'ersen
o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän I feel'd mysen
free.

xv

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk stood a-gawmin'[1]
in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istead of a quart o'
gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an' I wur chousin'
the wife,
Fur I could n't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nobbut to
saäve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is airm, an' 'e
shaws it to me,
"Feëal thou this! thou can't graw this upo' watter!"
says he.
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as candles was
lit,
" Thou moänt do it," he says, " tha mun breäk 'im off
bit by bit."
" Thou 'rt but a Methody-man," says Parson, and laäys
down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, " but I respecks tha
fur that; "

[1] Staring vacantly.

An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spanks 'is 'and into mine, " fur I respecks tha," says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro' hafe the coontryside.

XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan' to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII

Would n't a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw doubt;
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur I 'd feäl mysen cleän disgraäced.

XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, " My lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the divil 's in 'im," said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally be left aloän,
I 'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

XIX

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin' along the streeät,
Does n't tha knaw 'er—sa pratty, an' feät, an' neät, an' sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-goin to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-puddin'[1] an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä, no fur Sally's oän kin.

[1] A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

The Revenge

A Ballad of the Fleet

I

AT Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.

But I 've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,

With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
" Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There 'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: " We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft

Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought herself and went,
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far
over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and
the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built
galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with
her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so
could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world
before?

X

For he said, " Fight on! fight on!"
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer
night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly
dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the
head,
And he said, " Fight on! fight on!"

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far
over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us
all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that
we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of
them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder
was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split
her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

XII

And the gunner said, " Ay, ay," but the seamen made reply:
" We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
" I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do.
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap

The Revenge

That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the deep,
And they mann'd the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the wholed sea plunged and fell on the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

The Sisters

THEY have left the doors ajar; and by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the song,
Their favourite—which I call "The Tables Turn'd."
Evelyn begins it, "O diviner Air."

EVELYN

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that—you scarce could better that!
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,

The Sisters

Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,
As one is somewhat graver than the other—
Edith than Evelyn. Your good uncle, whom
You count the father of your fortune, longs
For this alliance. Let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt,
Being a watchful parent, you are taken
With one or other; tho' sometimes I fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt
Between the two—which must not be—which might
Be death to one. They both are beautiful;
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.
Woo her and gain her then; no wavering, boy!
The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.
Not so; their mother and her sister loved
More passionately still.
But that my best
And oldest friend, your uncle, wishes it,

And that I know you worthy every way
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath
To part them, or part from them; and yet one
Should marry, or all the broad lands in your view
From this bay-window—which our house has held
Three hundred years—will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,
A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own
Were silver, "Get them wedded" would he say.
And once my prattling Edith ask'd him "Why?"
"Ay, why?" said he, "for why should I go lame?"
Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.
For see—this wine—the grape from whence it flow'd
Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,
When that brave soldier, down the terrible ridge
Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,
And caught the laming bullet. He left me this,
Which yet retains a memory of its youth,
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come!
Here 's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name—no fault of mine!
You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-time
By change of feather; for all that, my boy,
Some birds are sick and sullen when they moult.

The Sisters

An old and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd
Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.
Once more—a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.
The highway running by it leaves a breadth
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,
One bright May morning in a world of song,
I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aërial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd,
Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.
The face of one there sitting opposite,
On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
May seem—with goodly rhyme and reason for it—
Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once, when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm—one lightning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect

That less than momentary thunder-sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The sun himself has limn'd the face for me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
For look you here—the shadows are too deep,
And like the critic's blurring comment make
The veriest beauties of the work appear
The darkest faults; the sweet eyes frown, the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flashed thro' sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen boughs
Of our New Forest. I was there alone.
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
For ever past me by; when one quick peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me
Call'd me to join them; so with these I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,
The worse for her, for me! Was I content?
Ay—no, not quite; for now and then I thought
Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal
Is high in heaven, and lodged with Plato's God,
Not findable here—content, and not content,
In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,
" Good! very like! not altogether he."

As yet I had not bound myself by words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love *me*. Then came the day when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts were fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of all—
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—
Had braced my purpose to declare myself.
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell—I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors—
On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,

The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—there,
There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,
The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from the hall,
And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honour—bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counter-pressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not see—
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yestermorn?
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and form?
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there—
Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of it—
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—
What end but darkness could ensue from this
For all the three? So Love and Honour jarr'd,
Tho' Love and Honour join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
"My mother bids me ask" (I did not tell you—
A widow with less guile than many a child.
God help the wrinkled children that are Christ's
As well as the plump cheek—she wrought us harm,
Poor soul, not knowing!) "Are you ill?"—so ran
The letter—"you have not been here of late.
You will not find me here. At last I go
On that long-promised visit to the North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you. Farewell.
Pray come and see my mother. Almost blind
With ever-growing cataract, yet she thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again farewell."

Cold words from one I had hoped to warm so far
That I could stamp my image on her heart!
"Pray come and see my mother, and farewell."
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish, strange!
What dwarfs are men! my strangled vanity
Utter'd a stifled cry— to have vext myself
And all in vain for her—cold heart or none—
No bride for me. Yet so my path was clear
To win the sister.
Whom I woo'd and won.
For Evelyn knew not of my former suit,
Because the simple mother work'd upon

By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.
And Edith would be bridesmaid on the day.
But on that day, not being all at ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon her,
Before the first "I will" was utter'd, saw
The bridesmaid pale, statue-like, passionless—
"No harm, no harm"—I turn'd again, and placed
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So when we parted, Edith spoke no word,
She wept no tear, but round my Evelyn clung
In utter silence for so long, I thought,
"What, will she never set her sister free?"

We left her, happy each in each, and then,
As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have torrents, lakes,
Hills, the great things of Nature and the fair,
To lift us as it were from commonplace,
And help us to our joy. Better have sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,
To change with her horizon, if true Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would not live
Save that I think this gross hard-seeming world
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
Behind the world, that make our griefs our gains.

For on the dark night of our marriage-day
The great tragedian, that had quench'd herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid—she
That loved me—our true Edith—her brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of autumn rain
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray
Before *that* altar—so I think; and there
They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

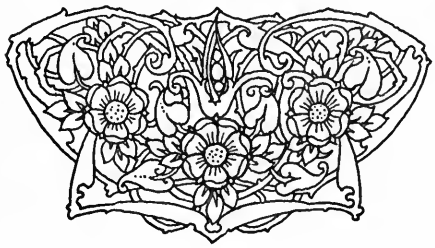
I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past away.
And on our home-return the daily want
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence
Of nature, or desire that her lost child
Should earn from both the praise of heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the dead,
And told the living daughter with what love
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

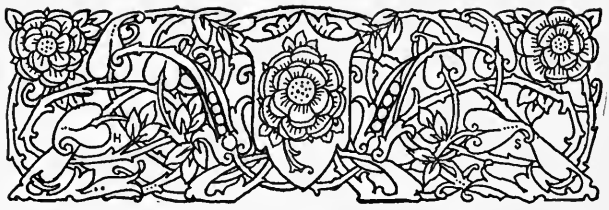
Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the twins—
Did I not tell you they were twins—prevail'd

So far that no caress could win my wife
Back to that passionate answer of full heart
I had from her at first. Not that her love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd
Edith; and in the second year was born
A second—this I named from her own self,
Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she join'd,
In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering all
The love they both have borne me, and the love
I bore them both—divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the grave—
I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,
And not without good reason, my good son—
Is yet untouch'd. And I that hold them both
Dearest of all things—well, I am not sure—
But if there lie a preference either way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
" Most dearest " be a true superlative—
I think *I* likewise love your Edith most.





The Village Wife; or, The Entail[1]

I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha, my lass, fur new Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I 'll goä wi' tha back; all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I warrants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya breäks the shell.

II

Sit thysen down fur a bit; hev a glass o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I niver not took to she.

[1] See note on pronunciation, p. 20

But Nelly, the last of the cletch,[1] I liked 'er the fust on 'em all,
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es died o' the fever at fall;
An' I thowt 't wur the will o' the Lord, but Miss Annie she said it wur draäins,
Fur she hed n't naw coomfut in 'er, an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord, my childer, I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone.

III

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass—tha dosn' knaw what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the lawyer ha towd it me.
" When theer 's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by the fault o' that ere maäle—
The gells they counts fur nowt, and the next un he taäkes the taäil."

IV

What be the next un like? can tha tell ony harm on 'im, lass?—
Naäy sit down—naw 'urry—sa cowd!—hev another glass!

[1] A brood of chickens.

Straänge an' cowd fur the time! we may happen a fall
o' snaw—
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm, but I likes to knaw.
An' I oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd; but 'e dosn' not
coom fro' the shere;
We 'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an' we haätes booök-
larnin' 'ere.

V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an' niver lookt arter
the land—
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes—'e 'd hallus a booök i'
'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh upo' seventy
year.
An' booöks, what 's booöks? thou knaws thebbe neyther
'ere nor theer.

VI

An' the gells, they hed n't naw taäils, an' the lawyer he
towd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he could n't cut down
a tree!
"Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I haätes 'em, my
lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an' they sucks the
muck fro' the grass.

VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an' gied to the tramps goin' by—
An' all o' the wust i' the parish —wi' hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' wus 'untin' arter the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt[1] an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-gowk[2] wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it could n't be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur 'atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a box in a daäy,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,
Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e did n't take kind to it like;

[1] Overdrest in gay colours.
[2] Owl.

But I eärs es 'e 'd gie fur a howry[1] owd book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e 'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e 'd coom to be poor;
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much—fur an owd scratted stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a brown pot an' a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es would n't goä, wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a shaäme to be seen;
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt,
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks, an' booöks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

VIII

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep' 'em all clear,
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none of 'er darters 'ere;
But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,

[1] Filthy.

An' the Missisis talk'd o' the lasses.—I 'll tell tha some o' these daäys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afoor—
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver derken'd my door.

IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled til 'e 'd gotten a fright at last,
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
"Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou 'll 'elp me a bit,
An' if thou 'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve mysen yit."

X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im, " Noä.
I 've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I iver let goä!
Coom! coom! feyther," 'e says, "why should n't thy booöks be sowd!
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their weight i' gowd."

XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' seed 'em, belong'd to the Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i' the middle to kindle the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to nowt at the saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII

Ya would n't find Charlie's likes—'e were that outdacious at 'oäm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out hell wi' a small-tooth coämb—
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an' droonk wi' the farmer's aäle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e would n't cut off the taäil.

XIII

Thou 's coom'd oop by the beck; and a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the maäy es I seed it to-year—
Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it gied me a scare tother night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i' the derk, fur it looökt sa white.

"Billy," says 'e, "hev a joomp!"—thaw the banks o' the beck be sa high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un, thaw niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an' Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but 'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eäd.
Hallus a soft un, Squire! an' 'e smiled, fur 'e hed n't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried togither, an' this wur the hend.

XV

An' Parson as hes n't the call, nor the mooney, but hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o' the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, howsiver they praäy'd 'an praäy'd
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves their debts to be paäid.

Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo' poor owd Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur they weänt niver coom to naw good.

XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin', sa o' coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet'arts she niver 'ed none—
Straänge an' unheppen[1] Miss Lucy! we naämed her "Dot an' gaw one!"
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she mun hammergrate,[2] lass, or she weänt git a maäte onyhow!
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me afoor my awn foälks to my faäce,
"A hignorant village wife es 'ud hev to be larn'd her awn plaäce,"

[1] Ungainly, awkward.
[2] Emigrate.

F. S. COBURN

Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes now be a-grawin' sa howd,
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt not fit to be towd!

XVII

Sa I did n't not taäke it kindly ov owd Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es soon es they went awaäy,
Fur lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,
Fur I 'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is gells es be-long'd to the land;
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd, sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they knaw'd what a hegg wur, an' all;
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they was n't that eäsy to pleäse,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid big heggs es tha seeäs;

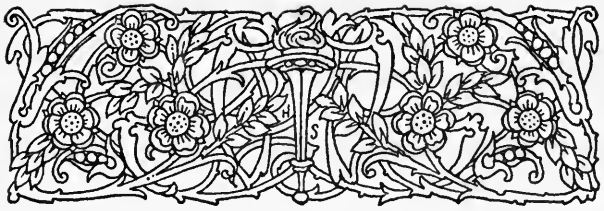
An' I niver puts saäme[1] i' *my* butter—they does it at Willis's farm;
Taäste another drop o' the wine—tweänt do tha naw harm.

XIX

Sa new Squire 's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire 's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my night-cap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd last night sa laäte—
Pluksh!!![2] the hens i' the peäs! why did n't tha hesp the gaäte?

[1] Lard.

[2] A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.



In the Children's Hospital

Emmie

I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O, yes, but they said too of him
He was happier using the knife than in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,

In the Children's Hospital

And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawn'd at his knee—
Drench'd with the hellish oorali—that ever such things should be!

II

Here was a boy—I am sure that some of our children would die
But for the voice of love, and the smile, and the comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd out of its place—
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was all but a hopeless case:
And he handled him gently enough; but his voice and his face were not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and made up his mind,
And he said to me roughly, "The lad will need little more of your care."
"All the more need," I told him, "to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all His children here, and I pray for them all as my own."
But he turn'd to me, "Ay, good woman, can prayer set a broken bone?"
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I heard him say,
"All very well—but the good Lord Jesus has had his day."

III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It will come by and by.
O, how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome smells of disease
But that He said, " Ye do it to me, when ye do it to these"?

IV

So he went. And we past to this ward where the younger children are laid.
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek little maid;
Empty, you see, just now! We have lost her who loved her so much—
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive plant to the touch.
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to send her the flowers.
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!

In the Children's Hospital

They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these "spirits in prison" are all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an angel's wing.
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crost on her breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said, "Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she 'll never live thro' it, I fear."

V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child did n't see I was there.

VI

Never since I was nurse had I been so grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from her cot to the next,
"He says I shall never live thro' it; O Annie, what shall I do?"

Annie consider'd. "If I," said the wise little Annie,
"was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for,
Emmie, you see,
It 's all in the picture there: 'Little children should
come to me' "—
Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it always
can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about
his knees.
"Yes, and I will," said Emmie, "but then if I call to
the Lord,
How should he know that it 's me? such a lot of beds
in the ward?"
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd
and said:
"Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em
outside on the bed—
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it
him plain,
It 's the little girl with her arms lying out on the
counterpane."

VI

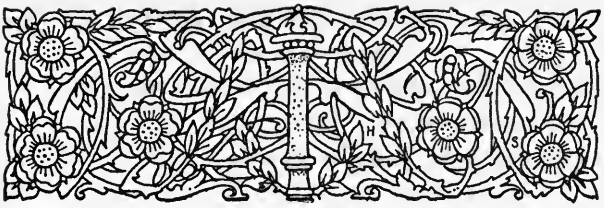
I had sat three nights by the child—I could not watch
her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do it no more.

In the Children's Hospital

That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the grey of the morning it seem'd she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see the child.

VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools; we believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane—
Say that His day is done! Ah, why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had past away.

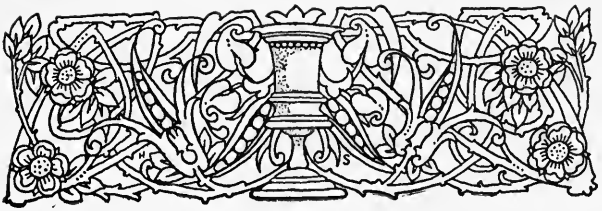


Dedicatory Poem to the Princess Alice

DEAD princess, living Power, if that which lived
True life live on—and if the fatal kiss,
Born of true life and love, divorce thee not
From earthly love and life—if what we call
The spirit flash not all at once from out
This shadow into Substance—then perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise
From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March morn that sees
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile again,
May send one ray to thee! and who can tell—
Thou—England's England-loving daughter—thou
Dying so English thou wouldst have her flag

Dedicatory Poem to the Princess Alice

Borne on thy coffin—where is he can swear
But that some broken gleam from our poor earth
May touch thee, while, remembering thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
Of England, and her banner in the East?



The Defence of Lucknow

I

BANNER of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow—
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

II

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we held with our lives—
Women and children among us, God help them, our children and wives!

The Defence of Lucknow

Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or for twenty at most.
" Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!"
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave;
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him—we laid him that night in his grave.
" Every man die at his post!" and there hail'd on our houses and halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we stoopt to the spade,
Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell,
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their shell,
Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think for the rest;
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet—
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us round—

The Defence of Lucknow

Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth
of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace,
and death in the ground!
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and
creep thro' the hole!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him—the
murderous mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the pickaxe be
thro'!
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again
than before—
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is
no more;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England
blew!

III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it
chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground thunder-clap
echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many
fiends in their hell—
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell
upon yell—
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard
the Redan!

The Defence of Lucknow

Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily drown'd by the tide—
So many thousands that, if they be bold enough, who shall escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders—their masses are gapp'd with our grape—
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

IV

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart and limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him;
Still—could we watch at all points? we were every day fewer and fewer.

The Defence of Lucknow

There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that past:
" Children and wives—if the tigers leap into the fold unawares—
Every man die at his post—and the foe may outlive us at last—
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall into theirs!"
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor palisades.
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your hand be as true!
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank fusillades—
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to which they had clung,
Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them with hand-grenades;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

V

Then on another wild morning another wild earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good paces or more.

The Defence of Lucknow

Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the light
of the sun—
One has leapt up on the breach, crying out: "Follow me,
follow me!"—
Mark him—he falls! then another, and *him* too, and
down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who can tell but the
traitors had won?
Boardings and rafters and doors—an embrasure! make
way for the gun!
Now double-charge it with grape! It is charged and we
fire, and they run.
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face have
his due!
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us,
faithful and few,
Fought with the bravest among us, and drove them, and
smote them, and slew,
That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India
blew.

VI

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do.
We can fight!
But to be soldier all day, and be sentinel all thro' the
night—
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms,
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and
soundings to arms,

The Defence of Lucknow

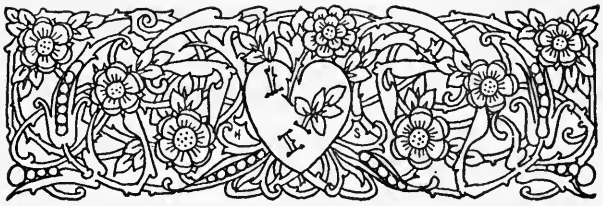
Ever the labour of fifty that had to be done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loop-
holes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the
ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract
skies,
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of
flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English
field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not
be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife,—
Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never could save us
a life.
Valour of delicate women who tended the hospital
bed,
Horror of women in travail among the dying and
dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment
for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we
knew—
Then day and night, day and night, coming down on
the still-shatter'd walls

The Defence of Lucknow

Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it you?
Saved by the valour of Havelock, saved by the blessing of heaven!
"Hold it for fifteen days!" we have held it for eighty-seven!
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.



Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham

(In Wales)

MY friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow—
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd

They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel—
So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
"Bara!"—what use? The shepherd, when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
"Dim Saesneg," passes, wroth at things of old—
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
He might be kindlier; happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was—thou hast come to talk our isle.
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all the world.
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou bringest
Not peace, a sword, a fire.
What did he say,
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I crost
In flying hither? that one night a crowd
Throng'd the waste field about the city gates;

The king was on them suddenly with a host.
Why there? they came to hear their preacher. Then
Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor voice
Nor finger raised against him—took and hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—thirty-nine—
Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends, as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your priest
Labels—to take the king along with him—
All heresy, treason; but to call men traitors
May make men traitors.
Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with household war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—
If somewhere in the North, as Rumour sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line—
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,
That were my rose, there my allegiance due.
Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd, doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved. My friend was he,
Once my fast friend; I would have given my life
To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives
To save his soul. He might have come to learn
Our Wiclif's learning; but the worldly priests,
Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find
What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,
Urge him to foreign war. O, had he will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him,
But he would not; far liever led my friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not—whether that heirless flaw
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the priest.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!
Lord, give thou power to thy two witnesses,
Lest the false faith make merry over them!
Two—nay, but thirty-nine have risen and stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
Before thy light, and cry continually—
Cry—against whom?
Him, who should bear the sword
Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly boy;
Who took the world so easily heretofore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him
Who jibed and japed—in many a merry tale
That shook our sides—at pardoners, summoners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine
Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?
Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
Of wine and harlotry— thy shame, and mine,
Thy comrade—than to persecute the Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,
The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks
Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten
Into adulterous living, or such crimes
As holy Paul—a shame to speak of them—
Among the heathen—
Sanctuary granted
To bandit, thief, assassin—yea, to him
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied to him
Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.
The Gospel, the priest's pearl, flung down to swine—
The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
Ah, rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant
To course and range thro' all the world, should be
Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church—
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,

Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
O Lord, how long!
My friend should meet me here.
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a cross!
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.
Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring-tree!
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
By this good Wiclif mountain down from heaven,
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue—
No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,
God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood
And holier. That was heresy.—My good friend
By this time should be with me.—"Images?"
"Bury them as God's truer images
Are daily buried." "Heresy.—Penance?" "Fast,
Hair-shirt and scourge—nay, let a man repent,
Do penance in his heart, God hears him." "Heresy—
Not shriven, not saved?" "What profits an ill priest
Between me and my God? I would not spurn
Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself—
No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."—
My friend is long in coming.—"Pilgrimages?"
"Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances, vice.

The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.
Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?" "Heresy"—
Hath he been here—not found me—gone again?
Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?—"Bread—
Bread left after the blessing?" how they stared,
That was their main test-question—glared at me!
" He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He veils
His flesh in bread, body and bread together."
Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,
" No bread, no bread. God's body!" Archbishop, bishop,
Priors, canons, friars, bell-ringers, parish-clerks—
" No bread, no bread!"—" Authority of the Church,
Power of the keys!"—Then I, God help me, I
So mocked, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days—
I lost myself and fell from evenness,
And rail'd at all the Popes that, ever since
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth
Into the church, had only proven themselves
Poisoners, murderers. Well—God pardon all—
Me, them, and all the world—yea, that proud priest,
That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,
That traitor to King Richard and the truth,
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
Amen!
Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
Be by me in my death.
Those three! the fourth

Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.
On *them* the smell of burning had not past.
That was a miracle to convert the king.
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
What miracle could turn? *He* here again,
He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
He would be found a heretic to Himself,
And doom'd to burn alive.
So, caught, I burn.
Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this,
For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,
Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;
For every other cause is less than mine.
The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,
Her love of light quenching her fear of pain—
How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?
Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,
God willing, I will burn for Him.
Who comes?
A thousand marks are set upon my head.
Friend?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it then!
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,
I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the priest
For holding there was bread where bread was none—

No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? is it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.[1]

[1] He was burnt on Christmas day, 1417.

Columbus

CHAINS, my good lord! In your raised brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the King know you deign to visit him
Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet
Before his people, like his brother king?
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the King, the Queen,
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell them all
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the " Peace, be still!"
And when I ceased to speak, the King, the Queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice

In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.
And then the great "Laudamus" rose to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's Mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic Queen—
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals we—
Our title, which we never mean to yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,
But our amends for all we might have done—
The vast occasion of our stronger life—
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter—earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,

All their cosmogonies, their astronomies.
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden guess
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;
Some thought it heresy, but that would not hold.
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a tent
Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat.
Some cited old Lactantius; could it be
That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,
The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe
Within the zone of heat; so might there be
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean
Against God's word. Thus was I beaten back,
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal
Once more to France or England; but our Queen
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord,
And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—I sail'd
On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.

The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind
Still westward, and the weedy seas—at length
The land-bird, and the branch with berries on it,
The carven staff—and last the light, the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky
Of dawning over—not those alien palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature—not
That Indian isle, but our most ancient East,
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacynth, and amethyst—and those twelve gates,
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death—I shall die—
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life
To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light—but no!
The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me
To mind me of the secret vow I made
When Spain was waging war against the Moor—
I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.
There came two voices from the Sepulchre,
Two friars crying that, if Spain should oust

The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I vow'd
That, if our princes harken'd to my prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your princes gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester John,
And cast it to the Moor. But *had* I brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home,
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms of Spain,
I have not; blue blood and black blood of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Castile,
Howl'd me from Hispaniola. For you know
The flies at home, that ever swarm about
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur down
Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd me so
That even our prudent King, our righteous Queen—
I pray'd them being so calumniated

They would commission one of weight and worth
To judge between my slander'd self and me—
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed—who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold—a single piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos—so
They tell me—weigh'd him down into the abysm-
The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my lord,
I swear to you I heard His voice between
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,
" O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no more?

Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for me that men
Cry out against thee. Was it otherwise
With mine own Son?"

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard His voice,
"Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,
Fear not." And I shall hear His voice again—
I know that He has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work His will—
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and king—
The first discoverer starves—his followers, all
Flower into fortune—our world's way—and I,
Without a roof that I can call mine own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,
Villainy, violence, avarice, of your Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish concubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in blood,

Some dead of hunger, some beneath the scourge,
Some over-labour'd, some by their own hands,—
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill
Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain—
Ah God, the harmless people whom we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
Who took us for the very gods from heaven,
And we have sent them very fiends from hell;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen
Smiles on me, saying, " Be thou comforted!
This creedless people will be brought to Christ
And own the holy governance of Rome."

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalised the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe
These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Columbus

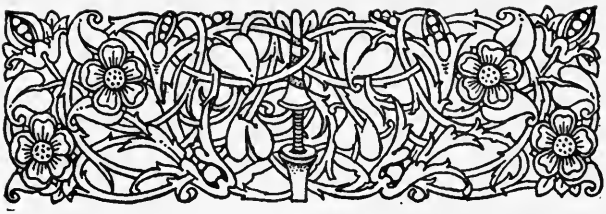
Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
Own voice to justify the dead—perchance
Spain, once the most chivalric race on earth,
Spain, then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave will say,
"Behold the bones of Christopher Colòn"—
" Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean—the chains?"
I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, " These same chains
Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic sea,
Which he unchain'd for all the world to come."

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in hell
And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son
Is here anon; my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
Bone against bone. You will not. One last word.

You move about the Court; I pray you tell
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one
Whose life has been no play with him and his
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,
Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and condoned—
That I am loyal to him till the death,

And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and day—
She is gone—but you will tell the King that I,
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with pains
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead
One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted; you have dared
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks!
I am but an alien and a Genovese.



The Voyage of Maeldune

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND A.D. 700)

I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead—
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off his head.
Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in worth,
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon earth.
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd on a Friday morn—
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

The Voyage of Maeldune

II

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on the shore was he.
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

III

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the long waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock could n't crow, and the bull could n't low, and the dog could n't bark.
And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a murmur, a breath—
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as death,

And we hated the beautiful isle, for whenever we strove
to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flitter-
mouse-shriek;
And the men that were mighty of tongue and could
raise such a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thousand
lances and die—
O, they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so fluster'd with
anger were they
They almost fell on each other; but after we sail'd away.

IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting; we landed, a score
of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices
and words.
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their voices
peal'd
The steer fell down at the plough and the harvest died
from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the
cattle went lame,
And the roof sank in on the hearth, and the dwelling
broke into flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds ran into the hearts
of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shouting and seized
one another and slew.
But I drew them the one from the other; I saw that we
could not stay,
And we left the dead to the birds, and we sail'd with our
wounded away.

V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers; their breath met us
out on the seas,
For the Spring and the middle Summer sat each on
the lap of the breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the cliffs, and the dark-
blue clematis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom the long convolvulus
hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain was lilies in
lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded down, running out
below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy, the blaze of gorse,
and the blush
Of millions of roses that sprang without leaf or a thorn
from the bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down from the peak
without ever a tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the sky to the blue
of the sea.

And we roll'd upon capes of crocus and vaunted our kith and our kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and chanted the triumph of Finn,
Till each like a golden image was pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with thirst in the middle-day heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as we hated the isle that was mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the million and flung them in bight and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in anger we sail'd away.

VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits; all round from the cliffs and the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little sun on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach and rioted over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jewell'd throne thro' the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-colour'd plums and with golden masses of pear,

And the crimson and scarlet of berries that flamed upon
bine and vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the poisonous pleasure
of wine;
And the peak of the mountain was apples, the hugest
that ever were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each other, with hardly
a leaflet between,
And all of them redder than rosiest health or than
utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended, the very sunset
aflame.
And we stay'd three days, and we gorged and we mad-
den'd, till every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him, and ever they
struck and they slew;
And myself, I had eaten but sparely, and fought till I
sunder'd the fray,
Then I bade them remember my father's death, and we
sail'd away.

VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire; we were lured by the
light from afar,
For the peak sent up one league of fire to the Northern
Star;

Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could stand upright,
For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a mortal affright.
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and so crazed that at last
There were some leap'd into the fire; and away we sail'd, and we past
Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air.
Down we look'd—what a garden! O bliss, what a Paradise there!
Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I could say,
Plunged head-down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled away.

VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean low on the land,
And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sunbright hand,
Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as he rose from his rest,
Bread enough for his need till the labourless day dipt under the west;

And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O, never was time so good!
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the boast of our ancient blood,
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle of springs,
And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy kings.
But at length we began to be weary, to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sun-bright hand of the dawn,
For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green isle was our own,
And we took to playing at ball, and we took to throwing the stone,
And we took to playing at battle, but that was a perilous play,
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and we sail'd away.

IX

And we came to the Isle of Witches and heard their musical cry—
" Come to us, O, come, come!" in the stormy red of a sky
Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the beautiful shapes,

For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of the loftiest capes,
And a hundred ranged on the rock like white sea-birds in a row,
And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on the wrecks in the sand below,
And a hundred splash'd from the ledges, and bosom'd the burst of the spray;
But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily sail'd away.

X

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the Double Towers,
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over with flowers,
But an earthquake always moved in the hollows under the dells,
And they shock'd on each other and butted each other with clashing of bells,
And the daws flew out of the towers and jangled and wrangled in vain,
And the clash and boom of the bells rang into the heart and the brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took sides with the towers,
There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were more for the carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd away.

XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd with Saint Brendan of yore,
He had lived ever since on the isle and his winters were fifteen score,
And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his eyes were sweet,
And his white hair sank to his heels, and his white beard fell to his feet,
And he spake to me: "O Maeldune, let be this purpose of thine!
Remember the words of the Lord when he told us, 'Vengeance is mine!'
His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in single strife,
Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each taken a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how long shall the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past to be Past."
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard, and we pray'd as we heard him pray,
And the holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we sail'd away.

XII

And we came to the isle we were blown from, and there
on the shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I saw him and let
him be.
O, weary was I of the travel, the trouble, the strife, and
the sin,
When I landed again with a tithe of my men, on the Isle
of Finn!

De Profundis

The Two Greetings

I

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddying light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,
With this last moon, this crescent—her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest, darling boy;
Our own; a babe in lineament and limb
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,
Indissolubly married like our love.
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
This mortal race thy kin so well that men

De Profundis

May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may
The fated channel where thy motion lives
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course
Along the years of haste and random youth
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full man;
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

II

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep, before our world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore—
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

II

For in the world, which is not ours, They said,
"Let us make man," and that which should be man,
From that one light no man can look upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons

De Profundis

And all the shadows. O dear Spirit, half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
That thou art thou—who wailest being born
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world
Among the numerable-innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
Out of His whole World-self and all in all—
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape
And ivy-berry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

The Human Cry

I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Halleluiah!—
  Infinite Ideality!
  Immeasurable Reality!
  Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

De Profundis

II

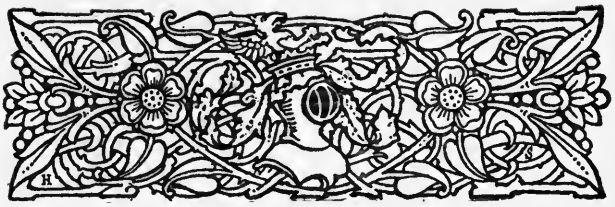
We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something—*that* also has come from Thee;
We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

Sonnets

Prefatory Sonnet

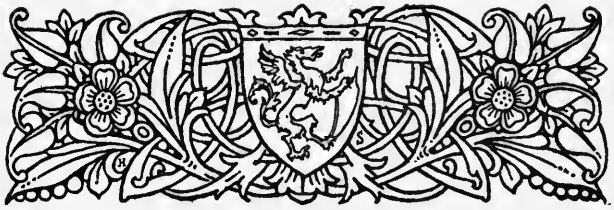
To "The Nineteenth Century"

THOSE that of late had fleeted far and fast
To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill
Of others their old craft seaworthy still,
Have charter'd this; where, mindful of the past,
Our true co-mates regather round the mast;
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast.
For some, descending from the sacred peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbour be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.



To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that knew you best,
Old Brooks, who loved so well to mouth my rhymes,
How oft we two have heard Saint Mary's chimes!
How oft the Cantab supper, host and guest,
Would echo helpless laughter to your jest!
How oft with him we paced that walk of limes,
Him, the lost light of those dawn-golden times,
Who loved you well! Now both are gone to rest.
You man of humorous-melancholy mark,
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past away!
I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark.
Σκιᾶς ὄναρ—dream of a shadow, go—
God bless you! I shall join you in a day.



Montenegro

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
By thousands down the crags and thro' the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

To Victor Hugo

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears,
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years
As yet unbroken, stormy voice of France!
Who dost not love our England—so they say;
I know not—England, France, all man to be
Will make one people ere man's race be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full courtesy
To younger England in the boy my son.

Translations, etc.

Battle of Brunanburh

I

[1] ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the linden-wood,[2]
Hack'd the battle-shield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

[1] I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November, 1876).

[2] Shields of lindenwood.

II

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their grandsires—
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their hearths and their homes.

III

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the ship-crews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the great
Sun-star of morning-tide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious creature
Sank to his setting.

IV

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

Battle of Brunanburh

V

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we hated;
Grimly with swords that were sharp from the grind-
stone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's-bosom,
Drew to this island—
Doom'd to the death.

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the sword-stroke,
Seven strong earls of the army of Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless numbers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII

Then the Norse leader—
Dire was his need of it,

Few were his following—
Fled to his war-ship;
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king in it,
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX

Also the crafty one,
Constantinus,
Crept to his North again,
Hoar-headed hero!

X

Slender warrant had
He to be proud of
The welcome of war-knives—
He that was reft of his
Folk and his friends that had
Fallen in conflict,
Leaving his son too
Lost in the carnage,
Mangled to morsels,
A youngster in war!

XI

Slender reason had
He to be glad of
The clash of the war-glaive—
Traitor and trickster
And spurner of treaties—

Battle of Brunanburh

He nor had Anlaf
With armies so broken
A reason for bragging
That they had the better
In perils of battle
On places of slaughter—
The struggle of standards,
The rush of the javelins,
The crash of the charges,[1]
The wielding of weapons—
The play that they play'd with
The children of Edward.

XII

Then with their nail'd prows
Parted the Norsemen, a
Blood-redden'd relic of
Javelins over
The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,
Shaping their way toward Dyflen [2] again,
Shamed in their souls.

XIII

Also the brethren,
King and Atheling,
Each in his glory,

[1] Lit. "the gathering of men."
[2] Dublin.

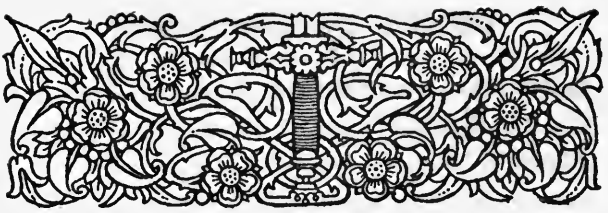
Went to his own in his own West-Saxonland,
Glad of the war.

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin—
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear it, and
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to rend it, and
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to gorge it, and
That grey beast, the wolf of the weald.

XV

Never had huger
Slaughter of heroes
Slain by the sword-edge—
Such as old writers
Have writ of in histories—
Hapt in this isle, since
Up from the East hither
Saxon and Angle from
Over the broad billow
Broke into Britain with
Haughty war-workers who
Harried the Welshman, when
Earls that were lured by the
Hunger of glory gat
Hold of the land.



Achilles over the Trench

(*Iliad*, *xviii.*, *202*)

SO saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and round
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas flung
Her fringed ægis, and around his head
The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden cloud,
And from it lighted an all-shining flame.
As when a smoke from a city goes to heaven
Far off from out an island girt by foes,
All day the men contend in grievous war
From their own city, but with set of sun
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the glare
Flies streaming, if perchance the neighbours round
May see, and sail to help them in the war;
So from his head the splendour went to heaven.
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood, nor join'd
The Achæans—honouring his wise mother's word—
There standing, shouted, and Pallas far away

Call'd; and a boundless panic shook the foe.
For like the clear voice when a trumpet shrills,
Blown by the fierce beleaguerers of a town,
So rang the clear voice of Æakidês;
And when the brazen cry of Æakidês
Was heard among the Trojans, all their hearts
Were troubled, and the full-maned horses whirl'd
The chariots backward, knowing griefs at hand;
And sheer-astounded were the charioteers
To see the dread, unweariable fire
That always o'er the great Peleion's head
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess made it burn.
Thrice from the dyke he sent his mighty shout,
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans and allies;
And there and then twelve of their nobles died
Among their spears and chariots.

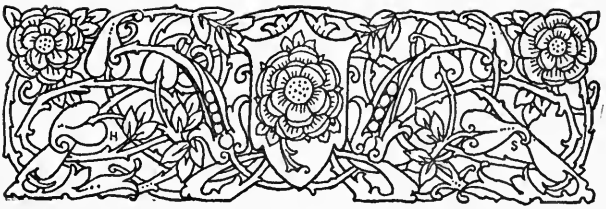
To Princess Frederica on Her Marriage

O YOU that were eyes and light to the King till
he past away
From the darkness of life—
He saw not his daughter—he blest her: the blind King
sees you to-day,
He blesses the wife.

Sir John Franklin

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

NOT here! the white North has thy bones; and thou,
Heroic sailor-soul,
Art passing on thine happier voyage now
Toward no earthly pole.



To Dante

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest, since thine own
Fair Florence honouring thy nativity,
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

Tiresias

And Other Poems

To E. Fitzgerald

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb grange,
Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand, and knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and grass;
And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,
And seem'd at first "a thing enskied,"
As Shakespeare has it, airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual height

To E. Fitzgerald

Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
One night when earth was winter-black,
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,
And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there roll'd
To meet me long-arm'd vines with grapes
Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me, wrought
To mould the dream; but none can say
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well;
A planet equal to the sun
Which cast it, that large infidel
Your Omar; and your Omar drew
Full-handed plaudits from our best
In modern letters, and from two,
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,
Two voices heard on earth no more;
But we old friends are still alive,
And I am nearing seventy-four,
While you have touch'd at seventy-five,
And so I send a birthday line
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt
In some forgotten book of mine

To E. Fitzgerald

With sallow scraps of manuscript,
And dating many a year ago,
Has hit on this, which you will take,
My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,
Less for its own than for the sake
Of one recalling gracious times,
When, in our younger London days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your praise.

Tiresias

I WISH I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made itself
Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek
The meanings ambush'd under all they saw,
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
What omens may foreshadow fate to man
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of human prayer,
Are slower to forgive than human kings.
The great God Arês burns in anger still
Against the guiltless heirs of him from Tyre,
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who found
Beside the springs of Dircê, smote, and still'd
Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,
The dragon, which our trembling fathers call'd
The God's own son.

Tiresias

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-white
As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn
For larger glimpses of that more than man
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts and lays the deep,
Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and loves,
And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie
Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont
Was more to scale the highest of the heights
With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the Sun
Would climb from out the dark, and linger there
To silver all the valleys with her shafts—
There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term
Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for heat;
The noonday crag made the hand burn; and sick
For shadow—not one bush was near—I rose,
Following a torrent till its myriad falls
Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest

Against the margin flowers; a dreadful light
Came from her golden hair, her golden helm
And all her golden armour on the grass,
And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes
Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark
For ever, and I heard a voice that said,
" Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too much,
And speak the truth that no man may believe."

Son, in the hidden world of sight that lives
Behind this darkness, I behold her still,
Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,
Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,
Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,
And, as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
The power of prophesying—but to me
No power—so chain'd and coupled with the curse
Of blindness and their unbelief who heard
And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,
Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,
And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar
For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,
To cast wise words among the multitude
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb
The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to aught that lives,
And these blind hands were useless in their wars.
O, therefore, that the unfulfill'd desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,
The boundless yearning of the prophet's heart—
Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd
To some great citizen, win all praise from all
Who past it, saying, " That was he!"
In vain!
Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those
Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
Within themselves, immerging, each, his urn
In his own well, draws solace as he may.

Menœceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear
Too plainly what full tides of onset sap
Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war
Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,
Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-footed horse

That grind the glebe to powder! Stony showers
Of that ear-stunning hail of Arês crash
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
Shock after shock, the song-built towers and gates
Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering
War-thunder of iron rams; and from within
The city comes a murmur void of joy,
Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,
And mothers with their babblers of the dawn,
And oldest age in shadow from the night,
Falling about their shrines before their Gods,
And wailing, " Save us."

And they wail to thee!
These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,
See this, that only in thy virtue lies
The saving of our Thebes; for, yesternight,
To me, the great God Arês, whose one bliss
Is war and human sacrifice—himself
Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet tipt
With stormy light as on a mast at sea,
Stood out before a darkness, crying, " Thebes,
Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I loathe
The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these
By his own hand—if one of these— "

My son,
No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
And to conciliate, as their names who dare
For that sweet mother land which gave them birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
Graven on memorial columns, are a song
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall
And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they meet
And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end
Be to end well! and thou refusing this,
Unvenerable will thy memory be
While men shall move the lips; but if thou dare—
Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus—then
No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious doom,
Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy name
To every hoof that clangs it, and the springs
Of Dircê laving yonder battle-plain,
Heard from the roofs by night, will murmur thee
To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro' thee shall stand
Firm-based with all her Gods.
The Dragon's cave
Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing vines—
Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd himself
At dead of night—thou knowest, and that smooth rock
Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings drawn back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to Thebes.
There blanch the bones of whom she slew, and these
Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast found
A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
Dead in her rage; but thou art wise enough,
Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the curse
Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike
Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—thou
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
Send no such light upon the ways of men
As one great deed.
Thither, my son, and there
Thou, that hast never known the embrace of love,
Offer thy maiden life.
This useless hand!
I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!
He will achieve his greatness.
But for me
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of old,
On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
There crown'd with worship—and these eyes will find
The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl

About the goal again, and hunters race
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human, strive
Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

" One height and one far-shining fire!"
And while I fancied that my friend
For this brief idyll would require
A less diffuse and opulent end,
And would defend his judgment well,
If I should deem it over nice—
The tolling of his funeral bell
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic times,
And all the phantoms of the dream,
With present grief, and made the rhymes,
That miss'd his living welcome, seem
Like would-be guests an hour too late,
Who down the highway moving on
With easy laughter find the gate
Is bolted, and the master gone.
Gone into darkness, that full light
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away

Tiresias

By night, into the deeper night!
The deeper night? A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—
If night, what barren toil to be!
What life, so maim'd by night, were worth
Our living out? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last; and laying flowers,
This wreath, above his honour'd head,
And praying that, when I from hence
Shall fade with him into the unknown,
My close of earth's experience
May prove as peaceful as his own.

The Wreck

I

HIDE me, Mother! my fathers belong'd to the church of old,
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the ancient fold,
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the Faith that saves.
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and the roar of waves,
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a noble name,
I am flung from the rushing tide of the world as a waif of shame,
I am roused by the wail of a child, and awake to a livid light,
And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted a grave by night.
I would hide from the storm without, I would flee from the storm within,
I would make my life one prayer for a soul that died in his sin,

I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was the deeper fall;
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face, I will tell you all.

II

He that they gave me to, Mother, a heedless and innocent bride—
I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only wounded his pride—
Spain in his blood and the Jew—dark-visaged, stately and tall—
A princelier-looking man never stept thro' a prince's hall.
And who, when his anger was kindled, would venture to give him the nay?
And a man men fear is a man to be loved by the women, they say.
And I could have loved him too, if the blossom can dote on the blight,
Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost that sears it at night;
He would open the books that I prized, and toss them away with a yawn,
Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which my nature was drawn,
The word of the Poet by whom the deeps of the world are stirr'd,

The music that robes it in language beneath and beyond
the word!
My Shelley would fall from my hands when he cast a
contemptuous glance
From where he was poring over his Tables of Trade and
Finance;
My hands, when I heard him coming, would drop from
the chords or the keys,
But ever I fail'd to please him, however I strove to
please—
All day long far-off in the cloud of the city, and there
Lost, head and heart, in the chances of dividend, consol,
and share—
And at home if I sought for a kindly caress, being wo-
man and weak,
His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow on the cheek.
And so, when I bore him a girl, when I held it aloft in
my joy,
He look'd at it coldly, and said to me, " Pity it is n't a
boy."
The one thing given me, to love and to live for, glanced
at in scorn!
The child that I felt I could die for—as if she were basely
born!
I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted now in a
tomb;
The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed my heart to
the gloom;

I threw myself all abroad—I would play my part with the young
By the low foot-lights of the world—and I caught the wreath that was flung.

III

Mother, I have not—however their tongues may have babbled of me—
Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but a dwarf was he,
And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd at him, first, askance,
With pity—not he the knight for an amorous girl's romance!
Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the light of a dowerless smile,
Having lands at home and abroad in a rich West-Indian isle;
But I came on him once at a ball, the heart of a listening crowd—
Why, what a brow was there! he was seated—speaking aloud
To women, the flower of the time, and men at the helm of state—
Flowing with easy greatness and touching on all things great,

Science, philosophy, song—till I felt myself ready to weep
For I knew not what, when I heard that voice,—as mellow and deep
As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd from an organ,—roll
Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice was the voice of the soul;
And the sun of the soul made day in the dark of his wonderful eyes.
Here was the hand that would help me, would heal me —the heart that was wise!
And he, poor man, when he learnt that I hated the ring I wore,
He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me with sorrow for evermore.

IV

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse had brought me the child.
The small sweet face was flush'd, but it coo'd to the mother and smiled.
"Anything ailing?" I ask'd her, "with baby?" She shook her head,
And the motherless mother kiss'd it, and turn'd in her haste and fled.

The Wreck

v

Low warm winds had gently breathed us away from the land—
Ten long sweet summer days upon deck, sitting hand in hand—
When he clothed a naked mind with the wisdom and wealth of his own,
And I bow'd myself down as a slave to his intellectual throne,
When he coin'd into English gold some treasure of classical song,
When he flouted a statesman's error, or flamed at a public wrong,
When he rose as it were on the wings of an eagle beyond me, and past
Over the range and the change of the world from the first to the last,
When he spoke of his tropical home in the canes by the purple tide,
And the high star-crowns of his palms on the deep-wooded mountain-side,
And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to the brink of his bay,
And trees like the towers of a minster, the sons of a winterless day.
"Paradise there!" so he said, but I seem'd in Paradise then
With the first great love I had felt for the first and greatest of men;

Ten long days of summer and sin—if it must be so—
But days of a larger light than I ever again shall know—
Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to my latest breath;
"No frost there," so he said, "as in truest love no death."

VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble plaintively sweet
Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell fluttering down at my feet;
I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it, Stephen and I,
But it died, and I thought of the child for a moment, I scarce know why.

VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many will say,
My sin to my desolate little one found me at sea on a day,
When her orphan wail came borne in the shriek of a growing wind,
And a voice rang out in the thunders of ocean and heaven, "Thou hast sinn'd."
And down in the cabin were we, for the towering crest of the tides
Plunged on the vessel and swept in a cataract off from her sides,
And ever the great storm grew with a howl and a hoot of the blast

In the rigging, voices of hell—then came the crash of the mast.
" The wages of sin is death," and there I began to weep,
" I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me into the deep,
For, ah, God! what a heart was mine to forsake her even for you!"
" Never the heart among women," he said, " more tender and true."
" The heart! not a mother's heart, when I left my darling alone."
" Comfort yourself, for the heart of the father will care for his own."
" The heart of the father will spurn her," I cried, " for the sin of the wife,
The cloud of the mother's shame will enfold her and darken her life."
Then his pale face twitch'd. " O Stephen, I love you, I love you, and yet "—
As I lean'd away from his arms —" would God, we had never met!"
And he spoke not—only the storm; till after a little I yearn'd
For his voice again, and he call'd to me, " Kiss me!" and there—as I turn'd—
"The heart, the heart!" I kiss'd him, I clung to the sinking form,
And the storm went roaring above us, and he—was out of the storm.

VIII

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger'd under a thunderous shock,
That shook us asunder, as if she had struck and crash'd on a rock;
For a huge sea smote every soul from the decks of *The Falcon* but one;
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to the helm had gone;
And I fell—and the storm and the days went by, but I knew no more—
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the dead on the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood still, and the skies were blue,
But the face I had known, O Mother, was not the face that I knew.

IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so amazed me that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling myself over and die!

But one—he was waving a flag—the one man left on the wreck—
" Woman,"—he graspt at my arm,—" stay there!"—I crouch'd upon deck—
" We are sinking, and yet there 's hope: look yonder," he cried, " a sail! "
In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate tears, and the wail
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was nearing us—then
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the child again.

X

They lower'd me down the side, and there in the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as we glided away,
And I sigh'd as the low dark hull dipt under the smiling main,
" Had I stay'd with *him*, I had now—with *him*—been out of my pain."

XI

They took us aboard. The crew were gentle, the captain kind,
But *I* was the lonely slave of an often-wandering mind;

For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a stormier wave,
" O Stephen," I moan'd, " I am coming to thee in thine ocean-grave."
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peace-fuller sea,
I found myself moaning again, " O child, I am coming to thee."

XII

The broad white brow of the isle—that bay with the colour'd sand—
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land;
All so quiet the ripple could hardly blanch into spray
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd—" My child,"—for I still could pray,—
" May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd by the curse
Of a sin, not hers!"
Was it well with the child?
I wrote to the nurse
Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart; and an answer came
Not from the nurse, nor yet to the wife—to her maiden name!

The Wreck

I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew that hand too well—
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the "deaths" in a paper, fell.
" Ten long sweet summer days " of fever, and want of care!
And gone—that day of the storm—O Mother, she came to me there!

Despair

I

IS it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking
over the sand?
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and
drew me to land?

II

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How
should I tell?
Does it matter so much what I felt? You rescued me—
yet—was it well
That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd, between me and
the deep and my doom,
Three days since, three more dark days of the Godless
gloom
Of a life without sun, without health, without hope,
without any delight
In anything here upon earth? but, ah, God! that night,
that night

Despair

When the rolling eyes of the lighthouse there on the fatal neck
Of land running out into rock—they had saved many hundreds from wreck—
Glared on our way toward death, I remember I thought, as we past,
Does it mattter how many they saved? we are all of us wreck'd at last—
" Do you fear?" and there came thro' the roar of the breaker a whisper, a breath,
" Fear? am I not with you? I am frighted at life, not death."

III

And the suns of the limitless universe sparkled and shone in the sky,
Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was a lie—
Bright as with deathless hope—but, however they sparkled and shone,
The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe like our own—
No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,
A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.

IV

See, we were nursed in the drear nightfold of your fatalist creed,

And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we had hoped for a dawn indeed,
When the light of a sun that was coming would scatter the ghosts of the past,
And the cramping creeds that had madden'd the peoples would vanish at last,
And we broke away from the Christ, our human brother and friend,
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke, of a hell without help, without end.

V

Hoped for a dawn, and it came, but the promise had faded away;
We had past from a cheerless night to the glare of a drearier day;
He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire,
The guess of a worm in the dust and the shadow of its desire—
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the weak trodden down by the strong,
Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre, murder, and wrong.

VI

O, we poor orphans of nothing—alone on that lonely shore—

Born of the brainless Nature who knew not that which she bore!
Trusting no longer that earthly flower would be heavenly fruit—
Come from the brute, poor souls—no souls—and to die with the brute—

VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity; I know you of old—
Small pity for those that have ranged from the narrow warmth of your fold,
Where you bawl'd the dark side of your faith and a God of eternal rage,
Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the human heart, and the Age.

VIII

But pity—the Pagan held it a vice—was in her and in me,
Helpless, taking the place of the pitying God that should be!
Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an idiot power,
And pity for our own selves on an earth that bore not a flower;
Pity for all that suffers on land or in air or the deep,
And pity for our own selves till we long'd for eternal sleep.

Despair

IX

"Lightly step over the sands! the waters—you hear them call!
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and errors—away with it all!"
And she laid her hand in my own—she was always loyal and sweet—
Till the points of the foam in the dusk came playing about our feet.
There was a strong sea-current would sweep us out to the main.
"Ah, God!" tho' I felt as I spoke I was taking the name in vain—
"Ah, God!" and we turn'd to each other, we kiss'd, we embraced, she and I,
Knowing the love we were used to believe everlasting would die.
We had read their know-nothing books, and we lean'd to the darker side—
Ah, God, should we find Him, perhaps, perhaps, if we died, if we died;
We never had found Him on earth, this earth is a fatherless hell—
"Dear love, for ever and ever, for ever and ever farewell!"
Never a cry so desolate, not since the world began,
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the coming of man!

X

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and you saved me,
a valueless life.
Not a grain of gratitude mine! You have parted the
man from the wife.
I am left alone on the land, she is all alone in the sea;
If a curse meant aught, I would curse you for not
having let me be.

XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was drunk with the
water, it seems;
I had past into perfect quiet at length out of pleasant
dreams,
And the transient trouble of drowning—what was it
when match'd with the pains
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life rushing back thro'
the veins?

XII

Why should I live? one son had forged on his father
and fled,
And if I believed in a God, I would thank Him, the other
is dead,
And there was a baby-girl, that had never look'd on the
light;
Happiest she of us all, for she past from the night to
the night.

XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-born, her glory,
her boast,
Struck hard at the tender heart of the mother, and
broke it almost;
Tho', glory and shame dying out for ever in endless
time,
Does it matter so much whether crown'd for a virtue,
or hang'd for a crime?

XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there, naked, amazed
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd myself turning
crazed,
And I would not be mock'd in a madhouse! and she, the
delicate wife,
With a grief that could only be cured, if cured, by the
surgeon's knife,—

XV

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment
of pain,
If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,
And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro'
the silence of space,
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,

When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last
brother-worm will have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an
earth that is dead?

XVI

Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writ-
ings? O, yes,
For these are the new dark ages, you see, of the popu-
lar press,
When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are
whooping at noon,
And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and crows to the
sun and the moon,
Till the sun and the moon of our science are both of
them turn'd into blood,
And Hope will have broken her heart, running after a
shadow of good;
For their knowing and know-nothing books are scat-
ter'd from hand to hand—
We have knelt in your know-all chapel too, looking
over the sand.

XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has
served us so well?
Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what
he will with his own;
Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us
groan!

XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have
been told,
The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser
would yearn for his gold,
And so there were hell for ever! but were there a God,
as you say,
His love would have power over hell till it utterly
vanish'd away.

XIX

Ah, yet—I have had some glimmer, at times, in my
gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the great God, for aught
that I know;
But the God of love and of hell together—they cannot
be thought,
If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him
and bring him to nought!

XX

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it mine? for why
would you save
A madman to vex you with wretched words, who is
best in his grave?

Blasphemy! ay, why not, being damn'd beyond hope
of grace?
O, would I were yonder with her, and away from your
faith and your face!
Blasphemy! true! I have scared you pale with my scan-
dalous talk,
But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in the way that
you walk.

XXI

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can I breathe divorced
from the past?
You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I do not escape
you at last.
Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find it a felo-de-se,
And the stake and the cross-road, fool, if you will, does
it matter to me?

The Ancient Sage

I

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of Christ,
From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved and honour'd him, and yet
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but worn
From wasteful living, follow'd—in his hand
A scroll of verse—till that old man before
A cavern whence an affluent fountain pour'd
From darkness into daylight, turn'd and spoke:

" This wealth of waters might but seem to draw
From yon dark cave, but, son, the source is higher,
Yon summit half-a-league in air—and higher
The cloud that hides it—higher still the heavens
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and whereout
The cloud descended. Force is from the heights.
I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the hills.

The Ancient Sage

What hast thou there? Some death-song for the Ghouls
To make their banquet relish? let me read.

" ' How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard!
What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?
How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!
And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?
But man to-day is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
Were never heard or seen.'

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and wilt dive
Into the temple-cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou
Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise,
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst not know;
For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,
The abysm of all abysms, beneath, within
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million-millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for evermore,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,

The Ancient Sage

To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
Or even than the Nameless is to me.
"And when thou sendest thy free soul thro' heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor boundlessness,
Thou seest the Nameless of the hundred names.
" And if the Nameless should withdraw from all
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the dark.

" ' And since—from when this earth began—
The Nameless never came
Among us, never spake with man,
And never named the Name '—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one.
Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay, my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thyself,
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!
She reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of ' Yes ' and ' No,'

She sees the best that glimmers thro' the worst,
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage!'

"'What Power? aught akin to Mind,
The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the gods gone blind
Who see not what they do?'

But some in yonder city hold, my son,
That none but gods could build this house of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work of man,
A beauty with defect—till That which knows,
And is not known, but felt thro' what we feel
Within ourselves is highest, shall descend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the last
According to the Highest in the Highest.

"'What Power but the Years that make
And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours
That cancel weal with woe,
And wind the front of youth with flowers,
And cap our age with snow?'

The Ancient Sage

The days and hours are ever glancing by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain,
But with the Nameless is nor day nor hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought,
Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now—
This double seeming of the single world!—
My words are like the babblings in a dream
Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.
But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,
Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

" ' The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;
Who clings to earth, and once would dare
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold.
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind;
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;
The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head;
The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;

The Ancient Sage

The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while' —

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

" 'The shaft of scorn that once had stung
But wakes a dotard smile.'

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

" ' The statesman's brain that sway'd the past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms
The merchant's hope no more:
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The ploughman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plough'd;
The poet whom his age would quote
As heir of endless fame—
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlived his day,
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night.'

The shell must bréak before the bird can fly.

" ' The years that when my youth began
Had set the lily and rose

The Ancient Sage

By all my ways where'er they ran,
  Have ended mortal foes;
My rose of love for ever gone,
  My lily of truth and trust—
They made her lily and rose in one
  And changed her into dust.
O rose-tree planted in my grief,
  And growing on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
  Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
  And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me "Earth is fair"
  When all is dark as night.'

My son, the world is dark with griefs and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the Heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates of Light;
For wert thou born or blind or deaf, and then
Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou glory in all
The splendours and the voices of the world!
And we, the poor earth's dying race, and yet
No phantoms, watching from a phantom shore
Await the last and largest sense to make
The phantom walls of this illusion fade,
And show us that the world is wholly fair.

" 'But vain the tears for darken'd years
  As laughter over wine,
And vain the laughter as the tears,
  O brother, mine or thine,

For all that laugh, and all that weep
And all that breathe are one
Slight ripple on the boundless deep
That moves, and all is gone.'

But that one ripple on the boundless deep
Feels that the deep is boundless, and itself
For ever changing form, but evermore
One with the boundless motion of the deep.

" ' Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set
The lamps alight, and call
For golden music, and forget
The darkness of the pall.'

If utter darkness closed the day, my son—
But earth's dark forehead flings athwart the heavens
Her shadow crown'd with stars—and yonder—out
To northward—some that never set, but pass
From sight and night to lose themselves in day.
I hate the black negation of the bier,
And wish the dead, as happier than ourselves
And higher, having climb'd one step beyond
Our village miseries, might be borne in white
To burial or to burning, hymn'd from hence
With songs in praise of death, and crown'd with flowers!

" ' O worms and maggots of to-day
Without their hope of wings! '

But louder than thy rhyme the silent Word
Of that world-prophet in the heart of man.

The Ancient Sage

" 'Tho' some have gleams, or so they say,
Of more than mortal things.'

To-day? but what of yesterday? for oft
On me, when boy, there came what then I call'd,
Who knew no books and no philosophies,
In my boy-phrase, ' The Passion of the Past.'
The first grey streak of earliest summer-dawn,
The last long strife of waning crimson gloom,
As if the late and early were but one—
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
Had murmurs, 'Lost and gone, and lost and gone!'
A breath, a whisper—some divine farewell—
Desolate sweetness—far and far away—
What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?
I know not, and I speak of what has been.
" And more, my son! for more than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of self
The gain of such large life as match'd with ours
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

" ' And idle gleams will come and go,
But still the clouds remain;'

The Ancient Sage

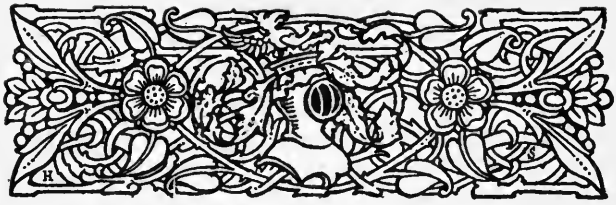
The clouds themselves are children of the Sun.

" ' And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign.'

And Day and Night are children of the Sun,
And idle gleams to thee are light to me.
Some say, the Light was father of the Night,
And some, the Night was father of the Light,
No night, no day!—I touch thy world again—
No ill, no good! such counter-terms, my son,
Are border-races, holding each its own
By endless war. But night enough is there
In yon dark city. Get thee back; and since
The key to that weird casket, which for thee
But holds a skull, is neither thine nor mine,
But in the hand of what is more than man,
Or in man's hand when man is more than man,
Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-men,
And make thy gold thy vassal, not thy king,
And fling free alms into the beggar's bowl,
And send the day into the darken'd heart;
Nor list for guerdon in the voice of men,
A dying echo from a falling wall;
Nor care—for Hunger hath the evil eye—
To vex the noon with fiery gems, or fold
Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous looms;
Nor roll thy viands on a luscious tongue,
Nor drown thyself with flies in honeyed wine;
Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,

And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;
Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,
Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wantonness.
And more—think well! Do-well will follow thought,
And in the fatal sequence of this world,
An evil thought may soil thy children's blood;
But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,
And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness,
A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,
And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,
And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou
Look higher, then—perchance—thou mayest—beyond
A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
And past the range of Night and Shadow—see
The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day
Strike on the Mount of Vision!

So, farewell."



The Flight

I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten? do not sleep, my sister dear!
How *can* you sleep? the morning brings the day I hate and fear;
The cock has crow'd already once, he crows before his time;
Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the hills are white with rime.

II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah, fold me to your breast!
Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and cry myself to rest!
To rest? to rest and wake no more were better rest for me,
Than to waken every morning to that face I loathe to see.

III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so calm you lay;
The night was calm, the morn is calm, and like another day;
But I could wish yon moaning sea would rise and burst the shore,
And such a whirlwind blow these woods as never blew before.

IV

For, one by one, the stars went down across the gleaming pane,
And project after project rose, and all of them were vain;
The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls and leaves the bitter sloe,
The hope I catch at vanishes, and youth is turn'd to woe.

V

Come, speak a little comfort! all night I pray'd with tears,
And yet no comfort came to me, and now the morn appears,
When he will tear me from your side, who bought me for his slave;
This father pays his debt with me, and weds me to my grave.

VI

What father, this or mine, was he, who, on that summer day
When I had fall'n from off the crag we clamber'd up in play,
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and took and kiss'd me, and again
He kiss'd me; and I loved him then; he *was* my father then.

VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a tyrant vice!
The godless Jephtha vows his child . . . to one cast of the dice.
These ancient woods, this Hall at last will go—perhaps have gone,
Except his own meek daughter yield her life, heart, soul to one—

VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O, the formal mocking bow,
The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that masks his malice now—
But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of all things ill—
It is not Love but Hate that weds a bride against her will;

IX

Hate, that would pluck from this true breast the locket
that I wear,
The precious crystal into which I braided Edwin's hair!
The love that keeps this heart alive beats on it night
and day—
One golden curl, his golden gift, before he past away.

X

He left us weeping in the woods; his boat was on the
sand;
How slowly down the rocks he went, how loth to
quit the land!
And all my life was darken'd, as I saw the white sail
run,
And darken, up that lane of light into the setting sun.

XI

How often have we watch'd the sun fade from us thro'
the West,
And follow Edwin to those isles, those Islands of the
Blest!
Is *he* not there? would I were there, the friend, the
bride, the wife,
With him, where summer never dies, with Love, the
sun of life!

XII

O, would I were in Edwin's arms—once more—to feel his breath
Upon my cheek—on Edwin's ship, with Edwin, ev'n in death,
Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the death-white sea should rave,
Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows of the wave!

XIII

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*? I swear and swear forsworn
To love him most whom most I loathe, to honour whom I scorn?
The Fiend would yell, the grave would yawn, my mother's ghost would rise—
To lie, to lie—in God's own house—the blackest of all lies!

XIV

Why—rather than that hand in mine, tho' every pulse would freeze,
I 'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of some foul disease.
Wed him? I will not wed him, let them spurn me from the doors,
And I will wander till I die about the barren moors.

XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her bridegroom on her bridal night—
If mad, then I am mad, but sane if she were in the right.
My father's madness makes me mad—but words are only words!
I am not mad, not yet, not quite—There! listen how the birds

XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding orchard trees!
The lark has past from earth to heaven upon the morning breeze!
How gladly, were I one of those, how early would I wake!
And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow for *his* sake.

XVII

They love their mates, to whom they sing; or else their songs, that meet
The morning with such music, would never be so sweet!
And tho' these fathers will not hear, the blessed Heavens are just,
And Love is fire, and burns the feet would trample it to dust.

XVIII

A door was open'd in the house—who? who? my father sleeps!
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he—some one—this way creeps!
If he? yes, he—lurks, listens, fears his victim may have fled—
He! where is some sharp-pointed thing? he comes, and finds me dead.

XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act—but how my temples burn!
And idle fancies flutter me, I know not where to turn;
Speak to me, sister, counsel me; this marriage must not be.
You only know the love that makes the world a world to me!

XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived—but we were left alone.
That other left us to ourselves, he cared not for his own;
So all the summer long we roam'd in these wild woods of ours,
My Edwin loved to call us then "his two wild woodland flowers."

XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in God's free light and air,
Wild flowers of the secret woods, when Edwin found us there,
Wild woods in which we roved with him, and heard his passionate vow,
Wild woods in which we rove no more, if we be parted now!

XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief to wander forth forlorn;
We never changed a bitter word, not once since we were born;
Our dying mother join'd our hands; she knew this father well;
She bade us love, like souls in heaven, and now I fly from hell,

XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light upon some lonely shore,
Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes, and hear the waters roar,
And see the ships from out the West go dipping thro' the foam,
And sunshine on that sail at last which brings our Edwin home.

XXIV

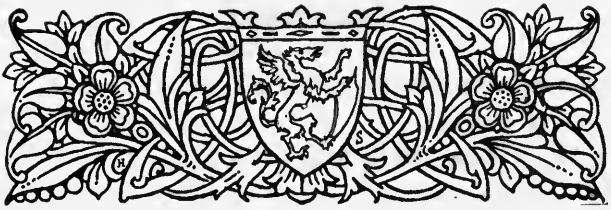
But look, the morning grows apace, and lights the old
church-tower,
And lights the clock! the hand points five—O me!—
it strikes the hour—
I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever ills betide!
Arise, my own true sister, come forth! the world is wide.

XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes are dim with
dew,
I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder by the yew!
If we should never more return, but wander hand in
hand
With breaking hearts, without a friend, and in a distant
land!

XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is hard, and harsh
of mind,
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those that should
be kind?
That matters not. Let come what will; at last the end
is sure,
And every heart that loves with truth is equal to endure.



To-morrow

I

HER, that yer Honour was spakin' to? Whin,
yer Honour? last year—
Standin' here be the bridge, when last yer
Honour was here?
An' yer Honour ye gev her the top of the mornin', "To-
morra," says she.
What did they call her, yer Honour? They call'd
her Molly Magee.
An' yer Honour 's the thrue ould blood that always
manes to be kind,
But there 's rason in all things, yer Honour, for Molly
was out of her mind.

II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night comin' down
be the sthrame,
An' it seems to me now like a bit of yistherday in a
dhrame—

To-morrow

Here where yer Honour seen her—there was but a slip
of a moon,
But I hard thim—Molly Magee wid her bachelor, Danny
O'Roon—
"You 've been takin' a dhrop o' the crathur," an'
Danny says, "Troth, an' I been
Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea at Katty's
shebeen;[1]
But I must be lavin' ye soon." "Ochone, are ye goin'
away?"
"Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate," he says, "over
the say"—
"An' whin will ye meet me agin?" an' I hard him,
"Molly asthore,
I 'll meet you agin to-morra," says he, "be the chapel-
door."
"An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?" "O' Monday
mornin'," says he;
"An' shure thin ye 'll meet me to-morra?" "To-
morra, to-morra, machree!"
Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honour, that had no
likin' for Dan,
Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to come away from
the man,
An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me, as light as a lark,
An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin wint into
the dark.

[1] Grog-shop.

But wirrah! the storm that night—the tundher, an' rain that fell,
An' the sthrames runnin' down at the back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded hell.

III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an' hiven in its glory smiled,
As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles at her sleepin' child—
Ethen—she stept an the chapel-green, an' she turn'd herself roun'
Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for Danny was not to be foun',
An' many 's the time that I watch'd her at mass lettin' down the tear,
For the divil a Danny was there, yer Honour, for forty year.

IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose an' the white o' the may,
An' yer hair as black as the night, an' yer eyes as bright as the day!
Achora, yer laste little whishper was sweet as the lilt of a bird!
Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music wid ivery word!

An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in sich an illigant
han',
An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as light as snow
an the lan',
An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver ye walkt in
the shtreet,
An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an' laid himself
undher yer feet,
An' I loved ye meself wid a heart an' a half, me darlin',
and he
'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss of ye, Molly
Magee.

V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I crack'd his
skull for her sake,
An' he ped me back wid the best he could give at ould
Donovan's wake—
For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan did n't come
to the fore,
An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she put thim all to
the door.
An', afther, I thried her meself av the bird 'ud come
to me call,
But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listhen to naither at all, at all.

VI

An' her nabours an' frinds 'ud consowl an' condowl wid
her, airly an' late,

" Your Danny," they says, " niver crasst over say to
the Sassenach whate;
He 's gone to the States, aroon, an' he 's married an-
other wife,
An' ye 'll niver set eyes an the face of the thraithur
agin in life!
An' to dhrame of a married man, death alive, is a
mortial sin."
But Molly says, " I 'd his hand-promise, an' shure he 'll
meet me agin."

VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory, an' both in
wan day,
She began to spake to herself, the crathur, an' whishper,
an' say,
" To-morra, to-morra! " an' Father Molowny he tuk
her in han',
" Molly, you 're manin'," he says, " me dear, av I
undherstan',
That ye 'll meet your paärints agin an' yer Danny
O'Roon afore God
Wid his blessed Marthyrs an' Saints;" an' she gev him
a frindly nod,
" To-morra, to-morra," she says, an' she did n't in-
tind to desave,
But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was as white as the
snow an a grave.

VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor diggin' the bog an' they foun'
Dhrownded in black bog-wather a corp lyin' undher groun'.

IX

Yer Honour's own agint, he says to me wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
" The divil take all the black lan', for a blessin' 'ud come wid the green! "
An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut his bit o' turf for the fire?
But och! bad scran to the bogs whin they swallies the man intire!
An' sorra the bog that 's in hiven wid all the light an' the glow,
An' there 's hate enough, shure, widout *thim* in the divil's kitchen below.

X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I hard his Riverence say,
Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh for the Jidgmint day,
An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep' the cat an' the dog,
But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they lived be an Irish bog.

XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun' an the grass,
Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see it that wint in to mass—
But a frish gineration had riz, an' most of the ould was few,
An' I did n't know him meself, an' nōne of the parish knew.

XII

But Molly kem limpin' up wid her stick,—she was lamed iv a knee,—
Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, "Div ye know him, Molly Magee?"
An' she stood up strait as the queen of the world—she lifted her head—
"He said he would meet me to-morra!" an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye would start back agin into life,
Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake like husban' an' wife.
Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the frinds that was gone!
Sorra the silent throat but we hard it cryin', "Ochone!"

An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten childer, hansome
an' tall,
Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he had lost thim
all.

XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in wan grave be
the dead boor-tree, [1]
The young man Danny O'Roon wid his ould woman,
Molly Magee.

XV

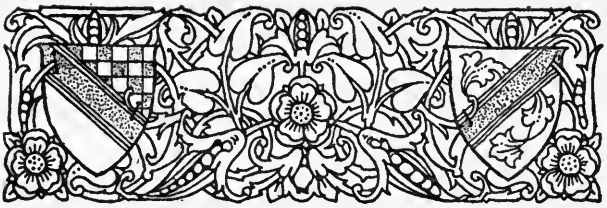
May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom an' spring
from the grass,
Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as ye did—over
yer Crass!
An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his song to the
sun an' the moon,
An' tell thim in hiven about Molly Magee an' her
Danny O'Roon,
Till Holy Saint Pether gets up wid his kays an' opens
the gate!
An' shure, be the Crass, that 's betther nor cuttin' the
Sassenach whate,
To be there wid the Blessed Mother an' Saints an'
Marthyrs galore,
An' singin' yer "Aves" an' "Pathers" for iver an'
ivermore.

[1] Elder-tree.

To-morrow

XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honour whativer I hard an' seen,
Yer Honour 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink yer health in potheen.



The Spinster's Sweet-Arts

I

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it mun be the time about now
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close wi' her paäils fro' the cow.
Eh! tha be new to the plaäce—thou 'rt gaäpin'—does n't tha see
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was sweet upo' me?

II

Naäy, to be sewer, it be past 'er time. What maäkes 'er sa laäte?
Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

III

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a lighted to-night
upo' one.
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I niver not listen'd
to noän!
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän kettle theere
o' the hob,
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the second, an'
Steevie an' Rob.

IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou sees that i' spite
o' the men
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two 'oonderd a-year
to mysen;
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony lass i' the
Shere;
An' thou be es pretty a tabby, but Robby I seed thruf
ya theere.

V

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin, an' I beänt not
vaäin,
But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw soom 'ud 'a
thowt ma plaäin,

An' I was n't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons—ye said I wur
pretty i' pinks,
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt sich a fool as ye
thinks;
Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air, as I be
a stroäkin' o' you,
But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I wur sewer that it
could n't be true;
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd it wur pleas-
ant to 'ear,
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but my two
'oonderd a-year.

VI

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was a-walkin' to-
gither, an' stood
By the claäy'd-oop pond, that the foälk be sa scared at,
i' Gigglesby wood,
Wheer the poor wench drowndid hersen, black Sal, es
'ed been disgraäced?
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-creeäpin' about
my waäist;
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's gittin' ower
fond,
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot fust i' the
pond;
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as I did that
daäy,

Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro' the claäy.
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoäm an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin' Yis.
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greeän,
Fur a cat may looök at a king, thou knaws, but the cat mun be cleän.
Sa we boäth on us kep' out o' sight o' the winders o' Gigglesby Hinn—
Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they pricks cleän thruf to the skin—
An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken shed i' the laäne at the back,
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once, an' thou runn'd oop o' the thack;
An' tha squeedg'd my 'and i' the shed, fur theere we was forced to 'ide,
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and one o' the Tommies beside.

VII

Theere now, what art 'a mewin' at, Steevie? for owt I can tell—
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, or I mowt 'a liked tha as well.

VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I wur chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt, shall I chaänge my staäte? but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down—
My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder o' flowers i' Maäy—
Why 'ed n't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur clatted all ower wi' claäy.
An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed that it could n't be,
An', Robby, I gied tha a raätin' that sattled thy coortin' o' me.
An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was a-cleänin' the floor,
That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble an' plague wi' indoor.
But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha moor na the rest,
But I could n't 'a lived wi' a man, an' I knaws it be all fur the best.

IX

Naäy—let ma stroäk tha down till I maäkes tha es smooth es silk,
But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou 'd not 'a been worth thy milk,
Thou 'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es all that I 'ears be true;
But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy, an' soä purr awaäy, my dear,
Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro' my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

X

Sweärin' ageän, you Toms, as ye used to do twelve year sin'!
Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur at a dog coomin' in,
An' boäth o' ye mun be fools to be hallus a-shawin' your claws,
Fur I niver cared nothink for neither—an' one o' ye deäd, ye knaws!
Coom, give hoäver then, weänt ye? I warrant ye soom fine daäy—
Theere, lig down—I shall hev to gie one or tother awaäy.
Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye shan't hev a drop fro' the paäil.
Steevie be right good manners bang thruf to the tip o' the taäil.

XI

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha? let Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been the Steevie
fur me!
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, 'e wur burn an' bred i'
the 'ouse,
But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver patted a mouse.

XII

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed led tha a
quieter life
Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A faäithful an'
loovin' wife!"
An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy windmill oop
o' the croft,
Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha? but that wur
a bit ower soft,
Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi' a niced red faäce,
an' es cleän
Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-new 'eäd o'
the Queeän,
An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen, fur, Steevie, tha
kep' it sa neät
That I niver not spied sa much es a poppy along wi'
the wheät,
An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an' seeädin' tha haäted
to see;
'T wur es bad es a battle-twig[1] 'ere i' my oän blue
chaumber to me.

[1] Earwig.

Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I could 'a taäen
to tha well,
But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin' boy an' a
gell.

XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be mysen o'
my cats,
But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I hev n't naw likin'
fur brats;
Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an' they goäs
fur a walk,
Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' does n't not 'inder
the talk!
But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky bibs, an' the
clats an' the clouts,
An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an' maäkin'
ma deäf wi' their shouts,
An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they was set upo'
springs,
An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an' saäyin' on-
decent things,
An' a-callin' ma "hugly" mayhap to my faäce, or
a-teärin' my gown—
Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them Tommies—Steevie,
git down.

XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you. I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!
Tom, lig theere o' the cushion, an' tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV

Theere! I ha' master'd *them!* Hed I married the Tommies—O Lord,
To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I could n't 'a stuck by my word.
To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when Molly 'd put out the light,
By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony hour o' the night!
An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,
An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the chairs!
An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let me 'a hed my oän waäy,
Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they 'ev n't a word to saäy.

XVI

An' I sits i' my oän little parlour, an' sarved by my oän little lass,

Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,
An' my oän door-poorch wi' the woodbine an' jessmine a-dressin' it greeän,
An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a roäbin' the 'ouse like a queeän.

XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es I be abroad i' the laänes,
When I goäs fur to coomfut the poor es be down wi' their haäches an' their paäins:
An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät when it beänt too dear,
They maäkes ma a graäter lady nor 'er i' the mansion theer,
Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much to spare or to spend;
An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä pleäse God, to the hend.

XVIII

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! what ha maäde our Molly sa laäte?
It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' theere—it be strikin' height—
" Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf," well—I 'eärd 'er a-maäkin' 'er moän,

An' I thowt to mysen, " thank God that I hevn't naw
cauf o' my oän."
Theere!
Set it down!
Now, Robby!
You Tommies shall waäit to-night
Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap—an' it sarves
ye right.

Prologue

To General Hamley

OUR birches yellowing and from each
The light leaf falling fast,
While squirrels from our fiery beech
Were bearing off the mast,
You came, and look'd and loved the view
Long-known and loved by me,
Green Sussex fading into blue
With one grey glimpse of sea;
And gazing from this height alone,
We spoke of what had been
Most marvellous in the wars your own
Crimean eyes had seen;
And now—like old-world inns that take
Some warrior for a sign
That therewithin a guest may make
True cheer with honest wine—

Prologue to General Hamley

Because you heard the lines I read
  Nor utter'd word of blame,
I dare without your leave to head
  These rhymings with your name,
Who know you but as one of those
  I fain would meet again,
Yet know you, as your England knows
  That you and all your men
Were soldiers to her heart's desire,
  When, in the vanish'd year,
You saw the league-long rampart-fire
  Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,
  And Wolseley overthrew
Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
  Paled, and the glory grew.

The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava

October 25, 1854

I

THE charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley—and stay'd;
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;
And he call'd, "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd and obey'd.
Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,

And he turn'd half round, and he bade his trumpeter sound
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die—
" Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the height,
With a wing push'd out to the left and a wing to the right,
And who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd up alone
Thro' the great grey slope of men,
Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
Like an Englishman there and then.
All in a moment follow'd with force
Three that were next in their fiery course,
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had made—
Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,
Gallopt the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

III

Fell like a cannon-shot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crash'd like a hurricane,
Broke thro' the mass from below,
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
Plunged up and down, to and fro,
Rode flashing blow upon blow,
Brave Inniskillens and Greys
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!
And some of us, all in amaze,
Who were held for a while from the fight,
And were only standing at gaze,
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
Folded its wings from the left and the right,
And roll'd them around like a cloud,—
O, mad for the charge and the battle were we,
When our own good redcoats sank from sight,
Like drops of blood in a dark-grey sea,
And we turn'd to each other, whispering, all dismay'd,
"Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade!"

IV

"Lost one and all" were the words
Mutter'd in our dismay;
But they rode like victors and lords
Thro' the forest of lances and swords

The Charge of the Heavy Brigade

In the heart of the Russian hordes,
They rode, or they stood at bay—
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,
Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray—
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Stagger'd the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer and a shout,
And the foeman surged, and waver'd, and reel'd
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill, out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

V

Glory to each and to all, and the charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all the Brigade!

NOTE.—The "three hundred" of the "Heavy Brigade" who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2d squadron of Inniskillens; the remainder of the "Heavy Brigade" subsequently dashing up to their support.

The "three" were Scarlett's aide-de-camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter, and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him.

Epilogue

IRENE.

NOT this way will you set your name
A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should blame
The barbarism of wars.
A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be grey,
And that bright hair the modern sun,
Those eyes the blue to-day,
You wrong me, passionate little friend.
I would that wars should cease,
I would the globe from end to end
Might sow and reap in peace,

Epilogue

And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,
Or Trade refrain the Powers
From war with kindly links of gold,
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles.
But since our mortal shadow, Ill,
To waste this earth began—
Perchance from some abuse of Will
In worlds before the man
Involving ours—he needs must fight
To make true peace his own,
He needs must combat might with might,
Or Might would rule alone;
And who loves war for war's own sake
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
But let the patriot-soldier take
His meed of fame in verse;
Nay—tho' that realm were in the wrong
For which her warriors bleed,
It still were right to crown with song
The warrior's noble deed—
A crown the Singer hopes may last,
For so the deed endures;
But Song will vanish in the Vast;
And that large phrase of yours

Epilogue

" A star among the stars," my dear,
  Is girlish talk at best;
For dare we dally with the sphere
  As he did half in jest,
Old Horace? " I will strike," said he,
  " The stars with head sublime,"
But scarce could see, as now we see,
  The man in space and time,
So drew perchance a happier lot
  Than ours, who rhyme to-day.
The fires that arch this dusky dot—
  Yon myriad-worlded way—
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
  World-isles in lonely skies,
Whole heavens within themselves, amaze
  Our brief humanities.
And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,
  Tho' carved in harder stone—
The falling drop will make his name
  As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

  Let it live then—ay, till when?
  Earth passes, all is lost
In what they prophesy, our wise men,
  Sun-flame or sunless frost,

Epilogue

And deed and song alike are swept
  Away, and all in vain
As far as man can see, except
  The man himself remain;
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
  Too many a voice may cry
That man can have no after-morn,
  Not yet of those am I.
The man remains, and whatsoe'er
  He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
  That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art
  Not all in vain may plead
" The song that nerves a nation's heart
  Is in itself a deed."

To Virgil

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the "Works and Days,"
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word;

To Virgil

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages;
star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome—

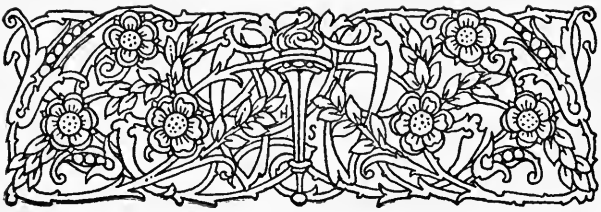
To Virgil

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began.
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.



The Dead Prophet

182–

I

DEAD!
And the Muses cried with a stormy cry,
"Send them no more, for evermore.
Let the people die."

II

Dead!
"Is it *he* then brought so low?
And a careless people flock'd from the fields
With a purse to pay for the show.

III

Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labour'd in lifting them out of slime,
And showing them, souls have wings!

The Dead Prophet

IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.
His friends had stript him bare,
And roll'd his nakedness everyway
That all the crowd might stare.

V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,
And a tree with a moulder'd nest
On its barkless bones, stood stark by the dead;
And behind him, low in the West,

VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and light,
And blurr'd in colour and form,
The sun hung over the gates of night,
And glared at a coming storm.

VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,
That on dumb death had thriven;
They call'd her " Reverence " here upon earth,
And " The Curse of the Prophet " in heaven.

VIII

She knelt—" We worship him "—all but wept—
" So great, so noble, was he!"
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she swept
The dust of earth from her knee.

IX

" Great! for he spoke and the people heard,
And his eloquence caught like a flame
From zone to zone of the world, till his word
Had won him a noble name.

X

" Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound ran
Thro' palace and cottage door,
For he touch'd on the whole sad planet of man,
The kings and the rich and the poor;

XI

" And he sung not alone of an old sun set,
But a sun coming up in his youth!
Great and noble—O, yes—but yet—
For man is a lover of truth,

XII

" And bound to follow, wherever she go
Stark-naked, and up or down,
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless snow,
Or the foulest sewer of the town—

XIII

" Noble and great—O, ay—but then,
Tho' a prophet should have his due,
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other men?
Shall we see to it, I and you ?

XIV

" For since he would sit on a prophet's seat,
As a lord of the human soul,
We needs must scan him from head to feet,
Were it but for a wart or a mole?"

XV

His wife and his child stood by him in tears,
But she—she push'd them aside.
" Tho' a name may last for a thousand years,
Yet a truth is a truth," she cried.

XVI

And she that had haunted his pathway still,
Had often truckled and cower'd
When he rose in his wrath, and had yielded her will
To the master, as overpower'd,

XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse about.
" Small blemish upon the skin!
But I think we know what is fair without
Is often as foul within."

XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from part,
And out of his body she drew
The red " blood-eagle " of liver and heart;
She held them up to the view;

XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the dead,
And all the people were pleased;
"See, what a little heart," she said,
"And the liver is half-diseased!"

XX

She tore the prophet after death,
And the people paid her well.
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath;
One shriek'd, "The fires of hell!"

Early Spring

I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plough'd hills
With loving blue;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.

II

Opens a door in heaven;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain walls
Young angels pass.

III

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,

And shine the level lands,
  And flash the floods;
The stars are from their hands
  Flung thro' the woods,

IV

The woods with living airs
  How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
  All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
  Heard by the land.

V

O, follow, leaping blood,
  The season's lure!
O heart, look down and up
  Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
  Like snowdrops, pure!

VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade
  Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
  Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
  In sound and smell!

VII

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

Prefatory Poem to My Brother's Sonnets

Midnight, June 30, 1879

I

MIDNIGHT—in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores;
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors.

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II

Midnight—and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark;

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,
As all my hopes were thine—
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine!

"Frater Ave atque Vale"

ROW us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed—"O venusta Sirmio!"
There to me thro' all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
"Frater Ave atque Vale"—as we wander'd to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

Helen's Tower

[WRITTEN AN THE REQUEST OF MY FRIEND, LORD DUFFERIN.]

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,
Dominant over sea and land.
Son's love built me, and I hold
Mother's love in letter'd gold.
Love is in and out of time,
I am mortal stone and lime.
Would my granite girth were strong
As either love, to last as long!
I should wear my crown entire
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,
And be found of angel eyes
In earth's recurring Paradise.

Epitaph on Lord Stratford de Redcliffe

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand among our best
And noblest, now thy long day's work hath ceased,
Here silent in our Minster of the West
Who wert the voice of England in the East.

Epitaph on General Gordon

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL MEMORIAL HOME
NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe,
Now somewhere dead far in the waste Soudan,
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know
This earth has never borne a nobler man.

Epitaph on Caxton

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

Fiat Lux (his motto)

THY prayer was "Light—more Light—while Time
shall last!"
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,
But not the shadows which that light would cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light.

To the Duke of Argyll

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise to know
The limits of resistance, and the bounds
Determining concession; still be bold
Not only to slight praise but suffer scorn;
And be thy heart a fortress to maintain
The day against the moment, and the year
Against the day; thy voice, a music heard
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells of feud
And faction, and thy will, a power to make
This ever-changing world of circumstance,
In changing, chime with never-changing Law.

Hands All Round

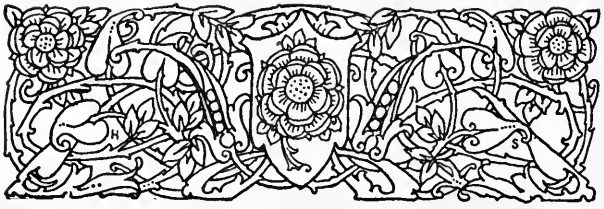
FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn night,
Then drink to England, every guest;
That man 's the best Cosmopolite
Who loves his native country best.
May freedom's oak for ever live
With stronger life from day to day;
That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch away.
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole!
To all our noble sons, the strong
New England of the Southern Pole!
To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm!

Hands All Round

To Canada whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm.
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great name of England drink, my friends,
And all her glorious empire, round and round.

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire!
To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire!
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state;
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great!
Hands all round!
God the traitor's hope confound!
To this great cause of Freedom drink, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and round.



Freedom

I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol;

II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapour-swathed
In meadows ever green;

III

For thou—when Athens reign'd and Rome,
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain;

IV

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam,
Howe'er blind force and brainless will
May jar thy golden dream

V

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to leaven all the mass,
Till every soul be free;

VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of her Human Star,
This heritage of the past;

VII

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou—when the nations rear on high
Their idol smear'd with blood,

VIII

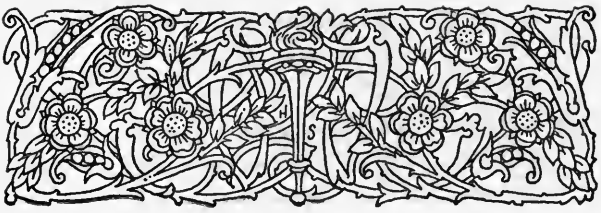
And when they roll their idol down—
Of saner worship sanely proud;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd;

IX

How long thine ever-growing mind
  Hath still'd the blast and strown the wave,
Tho' some of late would raise a wind
  To sing thee to thy grave,

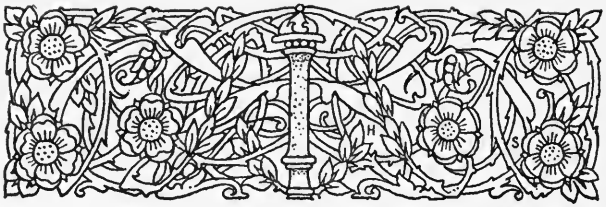
X

Men loud against all forms of power—
  Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous tongues,
Expecting all things in an hour—
  Brass mouths and iron lungs!



Poets and their Bibliographies

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier skies,
Old Virgil who would write ten lines, they say,
At dawn, and lavish all the golden day
To make them wealthier in his readers' eyes;
And you, old popular Horace, you the wise
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd lay,
And you, that wear a wreath of sweeter bay,
Catullus, whose dead songster never dies;
If, glancing downward on the kindly sphere
That once had roll'd you round and round the sun,
You see your Art still shrined in human shelves,
You should be jubilant that you flourish'd here
Before the Love of Letters, overdone,
Had swampt the sacred poets with themselves.



To H. R. H. Princess Beatrice

TWO Suns of Love make day of human life,
Which else with all its pains, and griefs, and deaths,
Were utter darkness—one, the Sun of dawn
That brightens thro' the Mother's tender eyes,
And warms the child's awakening world—and one
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,
Which from her household orbit draws the child
To move in other spheres. The Mother weeps
At that white funeral of the single life,
Her maiden daughter's marriage; and her tears
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—the child
Is happy—ev'n in leaving *her!* but thou,
True daughter, whose all-faithful, filial eyes
Have seen the loneliness of earthly thrones,
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown, nor let
This later light of Love have risen in vain,
But moving thro' the Mother's home, between
The two that love thee, lead a summer life,

To H. R. H. Princess Beatrice

Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to each Love,
Like some conjectured planet in mid heaven
Between two suns, and drawing down from both
The light and genial warmth of double day.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, Etc.

Introduction

By Stopford A. Brooke

SIXTY years pass by, and the young man is old, and Tennyson tells in a true dramatic monologue what the youth has become. It is a marvellous study to be written by a man over eighty years of age. He had now come to such years as "the many wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery home"; but the poetic force in this poem has a constant volume. The rhythm is as fine as in the days long past. Here is one example—

> Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
> Universal Ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

The poem is somewhat too long, but even that may have been the poet's intention. He had to represent age, and age is garrulous. And the image of old age is as clear and true in this *Locksley Hall* as the image of youth is in its predecessor. We might work out from the poem all the characteristics of an old man—

from babbling anger to soft forgiveness, from many-passioned memory to pathetic expectation of the world to come. All is age, and an age which, even in its petulance and prejudice, is to be loved and honoured. The more I read the poem, the more I think it worthy of respect as a work of art.

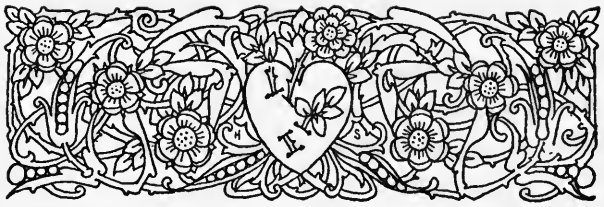
Many, like myself, will dislike its views about man and the future of man. They are the views of a half-pessimist tempered by belief in immortality. But no one has at all the right to say that they are the views of Tennyson. He had created a certain type of character in the young man of the poem of 1842, and though he himself enters into this young man, it is only when he is expressing the general joy and impulsiveness of youth. The real representative of Tennyson in 1842 is the *Ulysses*, and Ulysses is wholly different from the old or the young man in both the *Locksley Halls*. Tennyson shows in the later poem into what the special character of the hero of the earlier poem was likely to grow after sixty years had fled away. It would not be just to affirm that he is painting himself, as some have said; the subject infers that he is creating another man.

The young man took to science to relieve his mind of love's illusion. It was no wonder then that, given his temperament, he found himself in a sea of disappointment. He has not taken to work for man save on his estate; he has isolated himself with a wife and in his country-house, and he has continued to brood

over the ills of the world at a distance from them. He remains as much locked up in himself as he was before. Had he had more sympathy with the movement of the world, he might have seen some good, even in the revolutionists and the jabberers. He himself, exactly as in his youth, does not refrain from noise as loud as that made by those whom he denounces. He cries, like Carlyle, against mere speech, and sins, like Carlyle, by an overflow of language; sickening at the lawless din, unaware that his own din is even more lawless, and overwhelming his grandson with " Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos," and with all the wailing and screaming of the pessimists—a noise a thousandfold worse for mankind, or for a man to make, than the noise of all the mob-orators of the world. It is precisely what the young fellow of the first *Locksley Hall* would grow into, if he lived apart from men and kept an edge of poetry in him—enough to make him shudder at all the evil of which he hears, but not enough to dri e him into actual contention with it. This is tempered, as I said, by belief in immortality, and in evolution. The immortality will set the poor wretches of this cruel universe right in the world to come, but it holds out no present hope for this world. And evolution? Evolution has moved us into higher life with such an infinite slowness in the past that we can only expect a better world on earth, if we can dare to expect it at all, when æon after æon has passed away. At

last, out of this crying of despair, mingled with the pathetic forgiveness and the pathetic memories of personal life, arises a hidden hope, at which, if he had wrought, he would not have come to so sorrowful an age—" Love will conquer at the last," and the poem ends with an excellent morality.

From "Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life."



Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I
paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into
cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the
curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley
Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—she the faultless,
the divine;
And you liken—boyish babble—this boy-love of yours
with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in bab-
ble at last.

"Curse him!" curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith—but your worldling—*she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows "till death shall part us," she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—father, mother —be content,
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley—there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now—
I, this old white-headed dreamer, stoopt and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—black in white above his bones.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever! Ever? no—for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife,
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for Truth, and Good for Good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the Just—
Take the charm "For ever" from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost within a growing gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequence, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

"Forward" rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle—iron-hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls;

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun—
Crown'd with sunlight—over darkness—from the still unrisen sun.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?
" Kill your enemy, for you hate him," still, " your enemy " was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers—burnt at midnight, found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils ? are we men ?
Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers—and the beasts—whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise—
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to weakest as to strongest, "Ye are equals, equal-born."

Equal-born? O, yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.
Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger than the cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom
Larger than the lion,—Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plough.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Ploughmen, shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe,
known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness,—thro' the tongue-
sters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices—tell them "old experience
is a fool,"
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot
read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones
in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at
her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the
yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in
the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without
the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their
ruins down the slope.

Authors—essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rhymester,
play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues
of Art.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward —naked—let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism,—
Forward, forward, ay, and backward, downward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only " dust to dust " for me that sicken at your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you—you wonder—well, it scarce becomes mine age—
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think grey thoughts, for I am grey;
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, kingdoms and republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf, or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue—
I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?—

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then—
All her harvest all too narrow—who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her.—On this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty years ago—
She and I—the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now—
Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow.—

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things—
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper—Venus—were we native to that splendour or in Mars,
We should see the globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

F. S. COBURN 09

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so
silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, "Would to
God that we were there"?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the im-
measurable sea,
Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known
to you or me.

All the suns—are these but symbols of innumerable
man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the
plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled
sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword "Evo-
lution" here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king
of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother
insect wrong,

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

While the silent heavens roll, and suns along their
fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million
miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before her highest, man,
was born,
Many an æon too may pass when earth is manless and
forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded—pools of salt, and
plots of land—
Shallow skin of green and azure—chains of mountain,
grains of sand!

Only That which made us meant us to be mightier
by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the
human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the
human soul;
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in
the Whole.

. . . . . .

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-
guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall—to-morrow—you, you
come so late.

Wreck'd—your train—or all but wreck'd ? a shatter'd
wheel ? a vicious boy!
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish
you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying
in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city
slime ?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on
palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand
on the street.

There the master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her
daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the
dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the
rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the
poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your " Forward," yours are hope
and youth, but I—
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with
the cry,

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.
Leave the master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—Art and Grace are less and less:
Science grows and Beauty dwindles—roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the "lion passant" from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

. . . . . .

In this hostel—I remember, I repent it o'er his grave—
Like a clown—by chance he met me—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks—
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers—
Peept the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the chapel bell!
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, "I have loved thee well"?

Then a peal that shakes the portal—one has come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side—

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd him? who shall swear it cannot be?
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game.
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the will.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After

Follow you the star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the Highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—for man can half-control his doom—
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the past.
I that loathed have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee lord and master, latest lord of Locksley Hall.

The Fleet

I

YOU, you, *if* you shall fail to understand
What England is, and what her all-in-all,
On you will come the curse of all the land,
Should this old England fall
Which Nelson left so great.

II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power on earth,
Our own fair isle, the lord of every sea—
Her fuller franchise—what would that be worth—
Her ancient fame of Free—
Were she . . . a fallen state?

III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so small,
Her island-myriads fed from alien lands—

The Fleet

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;
Her fleet is in your hands,
And in her fleet her fate.

IV

You, you, that have the ordering of her fleet,
If you should only compass her disgrace,
When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet
Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late.

Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen

Written at the request of the Prince of Wales

I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!
In your welfare we rejoice,
Sons and brothers that have sent,
From isle and cape and continent,
Produce of your field and flood,
Mount and mine, and primal wood;
Works of subtle brain and hand,
And splendours of the morning land,
Gifts from every British zone;
Britons, hold your own!

II

May we find as ages run,
The mother featured in the son;
And may yours for ever be
That old strength and constancy
Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,
And wherever her flag fly,
Glorying between sea and sky,
Makes the might of Britain known;
Britons, hold your own!

III

Britain fought her sons of yore—
Britain fail'd; and never more,
Careless of our growing kin,
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
Men that in a narrower day—
Unprophetic rulers they—
Drove from out the mother's nest
That young eagle of the West
To forage for herself alone;
Britons, hold your own!

IV

Sharers of our glorious past,
Brothers, must we part at last?

Exhibition by the Queen

Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still?
Britain's myriad voices call,
" Sons, be welded each and all
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul!
One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne!"
Britons, hold your own!

To W. C. Macready

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night we part;
Full-handed thunders often have confessed
Thy power, well-used to move the public breast.
We thank thee with our voice, and from the heart.
Farewell, Macready, since this night we part,
Go, take thine honours home; rank with the best,
Garrick and statelier Kemble, and the rest
Who made a nation purer through their art.
Thine is it that our drama did not die,
Nor flicker down to brainless pantomime,
And those gilt gauds men-children swarm to see.
Farewell, Macready, moral, grave, sublime;
Our Shakespeare's bland and universal eye
Dwells pleased, through twice a hundred years, on thee.

Demeter

and other Poems

Introduction

By Stopford A. Brooke

IF *Demeter and Persephone* was written about the time at which it was published, in 1889, it is a wonderful proof of the persistence of mature power in old age. Tennyson was eighty years of age when this poem was issued. It bears no traces of failing strength, or of outworn imagination. Lines like

> The shrilly whinnyings of the team of Hell,

or,

> The sun
> Burst from a swimming fleece of winter grey,

are as clean-ringing and clear-eyed as any written in 1842. The introduction, with the slow dawning of Persephone's recognition of the earth, and of her mother who is the Earth-mother, is as good as the introduction to *Lucretius*, as delicate and tender as that is strong and austere. The imaginative thought which kept the

solemn, unhuman darkness of Hades still in the eyes of Persephone—

> Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
> Awed even me at first, thy mother—

the rapid picture of the lonely Fates,

> And, following out
> A league of labyrinthine darkness, came
> On three grey heads beneath a gleaming rift,

who "know not what they spin," and cry, "There is a Fate beyond us;" the dream of Demeter, which this cry originates, of a race of younger and kindlier gods whose reign and worship will be love, and who will subdue even Hades to their light; the sense Tennyson infuses into his readers that this dream is born out of the heart of the kindly earth itself—not a Christian thought but an anticipation of that thought; the ill-content of the Earth-goddess with the highest gods, who are old in their careless tyranny, and the founding of this ill-content with them on the ground that she is naturally nearer than they to men and fonder than they of the works of men—is she not the mother of them all?—the deep sympathy of Demeter with the earth-dwellers, and naturally her greater share in human passion—especially the most human of all passions, that of motherhood—all these ideas, in subtle, half-suggested images, passed through the fire of imagination and made lucid and crystalline thereby, are wrought into

the poem with a power which seems almost incredible in a poet of eighty years.

The poem smells of the fruitful rain-washed earth; the earth breathes and is pregnant and gives birth in it; all her motherhood loves all her children from line to line of it. Motherhood, first of the earth, and then of Humanity, is the innermost being of the poem—the "deathless heart of motherhood." At last, in order to make this universal more particular and more at home with us, the personal motherhood of Demeter, the motherhood of one heart for one child, is driven home to our imagination. When she loses her child, she implores heaven for her, she wanders over all lands to find her, she forgets her own earth; but the loveliest thing she does—and it is imagined with infinite tenderness—is to console all the troubled mothers of the world. She gives to failing children the same breast which nurtured Persephone—

Thy breast to ailing infants in the night.

To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava

I

AT times our Britain cannot rest,
At times her steps are swift and rash;
She moving, at her girdle clash
The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
The sceptres of her West, her East,
To one that ruling has increased
Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love
Their ruler. Your viceregal days
Have added fulness to the phrase
Of "Gauntlet in the velvet glove."

IV

But since your name will grow with time,
Not all, as honouring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the name
A golden portal to my rhyme;

V

But more, that you and yours may know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would owe.

VI

For he—your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you—
He fain had ranged her thro' and thro',
To serve her myriads and the State,—

VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest youth,
And on thro' many a brightening year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth;

VIII

Who might have chased and claspt Renown
And caught her chaplet here—and there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering down;

IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,
  And lay on that funereal boat,
  Dying, " Unspeakable," he wrote,
" Their kindness," and he wrote no more;

X

And sacred is the latest word;
  And now the Was, the Might-have-been,
  And those lone rites I have not seen,
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,
  Not there to bid my boy farewell,
  When That within the coffin fell,
Fell—and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon
  And alien stars. To question why
  The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine! and I may meet him soon;

XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,
  Nor settles into hueless grey,
  My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours.

On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria

I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe, the sceptre.

II

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in fable or history,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier,
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III

Nothing of the lawless, of the despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,
All is gracious, gentle, great and queenly.

On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria

IV

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firmament,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V

Queen, as true to womanhood as Queenhood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest!

VI

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighbourhood healthfuller,
Give your gold to the hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice

At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Grey with distance Edward's fifty summers,
Even her Grandsire's fifty half forgotten.

VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centuries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,

On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria

You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,
Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,
All your voices in unison,
Singing, "Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!"

XI

Are there thunders moaning in the distance?
Are there spectres moving in the darkness?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres vanish,
And the Light is Victor, and the darkness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

To Professor Jebb

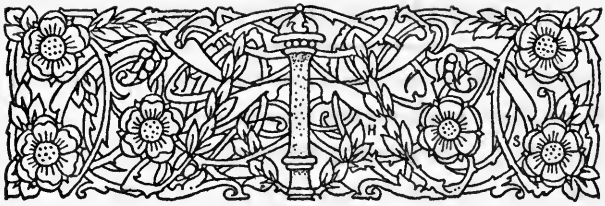
With the following Poem

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
Bear witness you, that yesterday[1]
From out the Ghost of Pindar in you
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say[2]

That here the torpid mummy wheat
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
As that which gilds the glebe of England,
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

[1] In Bologna.
[2] They say, for the fact is doubtful.



Demeter and Persephone

(In Enna)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that flies
All night across the darkness, and at dawn
Falls on the threshold of her native land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and dreams,
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
With passing thro' at once from state to state,
Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,
Might break thro' clouded memories once again
On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,
When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
That shadow of a likeness to the king
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!

Queen of the dead no more—my child! Thine eyes
Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
Burst from a swimming fleece of winter grey,
And robed thee in his day from head to feet—
"Mother!" and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
Awed even me at first, thy mother—eyes
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power
Draw downward into Hades with his drift
Of flickering spectres, lighted from below
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
But when before have Gods or men beheld
The Life that had descended re-arise,
And lighted from above him by the Sun?
So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,
The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
With flowers that brighten as thy footstep falls,
All flowers—but for one black blur of earth
Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car
Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee hence.
And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,
I feel the deathless heart of motherhood
Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe

Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence
The shrilly whinnyings of the team of Hell,
Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,
And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-maned,
Jet upward thro' the midday blossom. No!
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the space
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,
And breaks into the crocus-purple hour
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
I envied human wives, and nested birds,
Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of thee
Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave
Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,
And set the mother waking in amaze
To find her sick one whole; and forth again
Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,
"Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?"
And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,
"We know not, and we know not why we wail."
I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
And ask'd the waves that moan about the world,
"Where? do ye make your moaning for my child?"
And round from all the world the voices came,
"We know not, and we know not why we moan."
"Where?" and I stared from every eagle-peak,
I thridded the black heart of all the woods,

I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in the storms
Of autumn swept across the city, and heard
The murmur of their temples chanting me,
Me, me, the desolate mother! "Where?" and turn'd,
And fled by many a waste, forlorn of man,
And grieved for man thro' all my grief for thee,—
The jungle rooted in his shatter'd hearth,
The serpent coil'd about his broken shaft,
The scorpion crawling over naked skulls;—
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
Spring from his fallen God, but trace of thee
I saw not; and far on, and, following out
A league of labyrinthine darkness, came
On three grey heads beneath a gleaming rift.
"Where?" and I heard one voice from all the three,
"We know not, for we spin the lives of men,
And not of Gods, and know not why we spin!
There is a Fate beyond us." Nothing knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying man,
Without his knowledge, from him flits to warn
A far-off friendship that he comes no more,
So he, the God of dreams, who heard my cry,
Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow past
Before me, crying, "The Bright one in the highest
Is brother of the Dark one in the lowest,
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I, the child

Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee, the Power
That lifts her buried life from gloom to bloom,
Should be for ever and for evermore
The Bride of Darkness."

So the Shadow wail'd.
Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the Gods of heaven.
I would not mingle with their feasts; to me
Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on the lips,
Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
The man, that only lives and loves an hour,
Seem'd nobler than their hard eternities.
My quick tears kill'd the flower, my ravings hush'd
The bird, and lost in utter grief I fail'd
To send my life thro' olive-yard and vine
And golden-grain, my gift to helpless man.
Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-spears
Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and the Sun,
Pale at my grief, drew down before his time
Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter snow.

Then He, the brother of this Darkness, He
Who still is highest, glancing from his height
On earth a fruitless fellow, when he miss'd
The wonted steam of sacrifice, the praise
And prayer of men, decreed that thou shouldst dwell
For nine white moons of each whole year with me,
Three dark ones in the shadow with thy king.

Demeter and Persephone

Once more the reaper in the gleam of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-content
With them who still are highest. Those grey heads,
What meant they by their "Fate beyond the Fates"
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us down,
As we bore down the Gods before us? Gods,
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt, to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine; Gods indeed,
To send the noon into the night and break
The sunless halls of Hades into Heaven?
Till thy dark lord accept and love the Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole bright year with me,
And souls of men, who grew beyond their race,
And made themselves as Gods against the fear
Of Death and Hell; and thou that hast from men,
As Queen of Death, that worship which is Fear,
Henceforth, as having risen from out the dead,
Shalt ever send thy life along with mine
From buried grain thro' springing blade, and bless
Their garner'd autumn also, reap with me,
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of Earth
The worship which is Love, and see no more

Demeter and Persephone

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glimmering lawns
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior glide
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

Owd Roä[1]

NAÄY, noä mander[2] o' use to be callin' 'im Roä,
Roä, Roä,
Fur the dog 's stoän-deäf, an' 'e 's blind, 'e can
naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge as 'appy as iver
I can,
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver owäd mottal
man.

Thou 's rode of 'is back when a babby, afoor thou was
gotten too owd,
Fur 'e 'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was allus as good
as gowd.

[1] Old Rover. [2] Manner.

Owd Roä

Eh, but 'e 'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt; 'e could howd[1]
'is oän,
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when an' wheere to
bury his boäne.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an' 'e 'd niver not
down wi' 'is taäil,
Fur 'e 'd niver done nowt to be shaämed on, when we
was i' Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that, Dick, when
'e cooms to be deäd,
I thinks as I 'd like fur to hev soom soort of a sarvice
reäd.

Fur 'e 's moor good sense na the Parliament man 'at
stans fur us 'ere,
An' I 'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e could but stan'
for the Shere.

" Faäithful an' True "—them words be i' Scriptur—
an' Faäithful an' True
Ull be fun'[2] upo' four short legs ten times fur one upo'
two.

[1] Hold. [2] Found.

An' maäybe they 'll walk upo' two, but I knaws they runs upo' four,[1]—
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,
Ten year sin'—Naäy—naäy! tha mun nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd[2] the 'ouse, an' belt[3] long afoor my daäy,
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd[4] an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud coom at the fall o' the year,
An' sattle their ends upo' stools to pictur the door-poorch theere,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin' theere o' the brokken stick;[5]
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'[6] as graw'd hall ower the brick;

[1] *ou* as in "house." [2] "Owd-farran'd," old-fashioned. [3] Built. [4] "Twizzen'd," twisted. [5] On a staff *ragulé*. [6] Ivy.

An' theere i' the 'ouse one night—but it 's down, an' all on it now
Goän into mangles an' tonups,[1] an' raäved slick thruf by the plough—

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house, one night I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin' still as a stoän,

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowd as this, an' the midders[2] as white,
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi' the windle[3] that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin' alongside Roäver, but I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things—Doänt maäke thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,
An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was nobbut three, an' noän on 'em theere.

[1] Mangolds and turnips. [2] Meadows. [3] Drifted snow.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst an' duss n't not sleeäp i' the 'ouse,
But, Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins[1] was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst[2] at the night, an' the daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slushin' down fro' the bank to the beck,
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the good owd times 'at was goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the war, an' the times 'at was coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin' to let in furriners' wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan' ageän o' their feeät?

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller[3] as turn'd 'is back of hissen

[1] "Moästlins," for the most part, generally.
[2] Once. [3] Peel.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we could n't ha' 'eärd tha call,
Sa moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down, an' thy craädle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when moother 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I says to him, "Squire, ya 're laäte,"
Then I seed 'at 'is faäce wur as red as the Yule-block theere i' the graäte.

An' 'e says, "Can ya paäy me the rent to-night?" an' I says to 'im, "Noä,"
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,[1] "Then hout to-night tha shall goä."

"Tha 'll niver," says I, "be a-turnin' ma hout upo' Christmas Eäve?"
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my sleäve.

[1] Arm.

An' I thowt as 'e 'd goän cleän-wud,[1] fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is intent;
An' I says, "Git awaäy, ya beast," an' I fetcht 'im a kick, an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im, as if 'e 'd 'a brokken 'is neck,
An' I 'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy chaumber door would n't sneck;[2]

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my hairm hingin' down to the floor,
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I kick'd thy moother istead.
"What arta snorin' theere fur? the house is afire," she said.

Thy moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the gell o' the farm,
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when there warn't not a mossel o' harm;

[1] Mad. [2] Latch.

An' she did n't not solidly meän I wur gawin' that waäy
to the bad,
Fur the gell[1] was as howry a trollope as iver traäpes'd
i' the squad.

But moother was free of 'er tongue, as I offens 'ev tell'd
'er mysen,
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was nobbut
a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, " I 'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd onywaäys
let ma be good,"
But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair, an' screeäd
like a howl gone wud[2]—

" Ya mun run fur the lether.[3] Git oop, if ya 're ony-
waäys good for owt."
And I says, " If I beänt noäwaäys—not nowadaäys—
good fur nowt—

" Yit I beänt sich a nowt[4] of all nowts as 'ull hallus do
as 'e 's bid."
" But the stairs is afire," she said; then I seed 'er
a-cryin', I did.

[1] " The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged in the mud," but there is a sense of slatternliness in " traäpes'd " which is not expressed in " trudged."

[2] " She half overturned me and shrieked like an owl gone mad."

[3] Ladder. [4] A thoroughly insignificant or worthless person.

An' she beäld, " Ya mun saäve little Dick, an' be sharp about it an' all,"
Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin, when I gits to the top,
But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy moother was howdin' the lether, an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,
An' I was n't afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys as I was n't afeärd;

But I could n't see fur the smoäke wheere thou was a-liggin, my lad,
An' Roäver was theere i' the chaumber a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,
An' it was n't a bite but a burn, fur the merk 's[1] o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out, " Roä, Roä, Roä," thaw I did n't haäfe think as 'e 'd 'ear,
But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 'is mouth to the winder theere!

[1] Mark.

Owd Roä

He coom'd like a hangel o' marcy as soon as 'e 'eärd
'is naäme,
Or like tother hangel i' Scriptur 'at summun seed i' the
flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e promised a
son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the hangel i' saävin' a son
fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, " I mun gaw up ageän
fur Roä."
" Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?" I tell'd 'er, " Yeäs,
I mun goä."

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an' clemm'd[1]
owd Roä by the 'eäd,
An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I taäked 'im at
fust fur deäd;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeäm'd as
blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.[2] I could n't wakken
'im oop,

[1] Clutched. [2] "Bubbling," a young unfledged bird.

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the barn, fur the barn would n't burn
Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an' the wind was n't like to turn.

An' *I* kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is taäil fur a bit,
But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and thou was a-squeälin' thysen,
An' moother was naggin' an' groänin' an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An 'I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks[1] rummle down when the roof gev waäy,
Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theere sewer-ly, but the barn was as cowd as owt,
An' we cuddled and huddled togither, an' happt[2] wer-sens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but moother 'ed beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowd that night, poor soul, i' the straw.

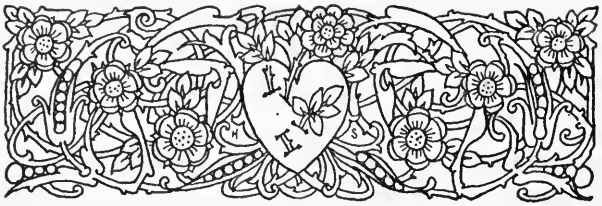
[1] Beams. [2] Wrapt ourselves.

Owd Roä

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the rig-tree[1] was
tummlin' in—
Too laäte—but it 's all ower now—hall hower—an'
ten year sin';

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, but I 'll coom an'
I 'll squench the light,
Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires—and soä, little
Dick, good-night.

[1] The beam that runs along the roof of the house just beneath the ridge.



Vastness

I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after
many a vanish'd face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with
the dust of a vanish'd race.

II

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's pale
history runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a
million million of suns?

III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless vio-
lence mourn'd by the wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular
torrent of lies upon lies;

IV

Stately purposes, valour in battle, glorious annals of
army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause,
trumpets of victory, groans of defeat;

V

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity
setting the martyr aflame;
Thraldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and
recks not to ruin a realm in her name.

VI

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts
that darken the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd up
by her vassal legion of fools;

VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and
her vintage, her silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbours, famishing pop-
ulace, wharves forlorn;

VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; gloom of the evening, Life at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway with her flying robe and her poison'd rose;

IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleasure, a worm which writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back to the curse of the light;

X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest Poverty, bare to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the rift in a throne;

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the laurell'd graves of the great;

XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no regrets for aught that has been,
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless competence, golden mean;

XIII

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy spites of the village spire;
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and vows that are snapt in a moment of fire;

XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the doing it, flesh without mind;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self died out in the love of his kind;

XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all these old revolutions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire—change of the tide—what is all of it worth?

XVI

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer,
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is fair?

XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-coffins at last?
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the deeps of a meaningless Past?

XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's anger of bees in their hive?—

. . . . .

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him for ever; the dead are not dead but alive.

The Ring

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing honey moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,
Coming soon,
Globe again, and make
Honey moon.

Shall not *my* love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new?

FATHER.

And who was he with such love-drunken eyes
They made a thousand honey moons of one?

MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert—his
The words, and mine the setting. "Air and words,"
Said Hubert, when I sang the song, "are bride
And bridegroom." Does it please you?

FATHER.

Mainly, child,
Because I hear your mother's voice in yours.
She—, why, you shiver tho' the wind is west
With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM.

Well, I felt
On a sudden I know not what, a breath that past
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was Man,

But cannot wholly free itself from Man,
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn
Stranger than earth has ever seen; the veil
Is rending, and the Voices of the day
Are heard across the Voices of the dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell, for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows and rules—
And utter knowledge is but utter love—
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the spheres—an ever opening height,
An ever lessening earth—and she perhaps,
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly link
With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low; what is it?
Your "Miriam breaks"—is making a new link
Breaking an old one?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not known.

MIRIAM.

And who? what other?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound?
For Naples which we only left in May?

MIRIAM.

No, father, Spain, but Hubert brings me home
With April and the swallow. Wish me joy!

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert weds in you
The heart of Love, and you the soul of Truth
In Hubert?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once
The lonely maiden Princess of the wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred summers out
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now
Your fairy Prince has found you, take this ring.

MIRIAM

"Io t' amo"—and these diamonds—beautiful!
"From Walter," and for me from you then?

FATHER.

Well,
One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.

Miriam am I not?

FATHER.

This ring bequeath'd you by your mother, child,
Was to be given you— such her dying wish—
Given on the morning when you came of age
Or on the day you married. Both the days
Now close in one. The ring is doubly yours.
Why do you look so gravely at the tower?

MIRIAM.

I never saw it yet so all ablaze
With creepers crimsoning to the pinnacles,
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below!
And how the birds that circle round the tower
Are cheeping to each other of their flight
To summer lands!

FATHER.

And that has made you grave?
Fly—care not. Birds and brides must leave the nest.
Child, I am happier in your happiness
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.

It is not that!

FATHER.

What else?

MIRIAM.

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.

What chamber, child?
Your nurse is here?

MIRIAM.

My mother's nurse and mine.
She comes to dress me in my bridal veil.

FATHER.

What did she say?

MIRIAM.

She said that you and I
Had been abroad for my poor health so long
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I ask'd
About my mother, and she said, "Thy hair
Is golden like thy mother's, not so fine."

FATHER.

What then? what more?

MIRIAM.

She said—perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now so far
Beyond the common date of death—that you,
When I was smaller than the statuette
Of my dear mother on your bracket here—
You took me to that chamber in the tower,
The topmost—a chest there, by which you knelt—
And there were books and dresses—left to me,
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I, she said,
I babbled, " Mother, Mother "—as I used
To prattle to her picture—stretch'd my hands
As if I saw her; then a woman came
And caught me from my nurse. I hear her yet—
A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER.

Garrulous old crone!

MIRIAM.

Poor nurse!

FATHER.

I bade her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the ring,
For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM.

" She too might speak to-day," she mumbled. Still,

I scarce have learnt the title of your book,
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day!
I brought you to that chamber on your third
September birthday with your nurse, and felt
An icy breath play on me, while I stoopt
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM.

This very ring,
" Io t' amo"?

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine
That, in the misery of my married life,
Miriam your mother might appear to me.
She came to you, not me. The storm you hear
Far-off is Muriel—your stepmother's voice.

MIRIAM.

Vext, that you thought my mother came to me?
Or at my crying, " Mother "? or to find
My mother's diamonds hidden from her there,
Like worldly beauties in the cell, not shown
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.
Your mother and stepmother—Miriam Erne
And Muriel Erne—the two were cousins—lived
With Muriel's mother on the down, that sees
A thousand squares of corn and meadow, far
As the grey deep, a landscape which your eyes
Have many a time ranged over when a babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert, yesterday,
And from the thousand squares, one silent voice
Came on the wind, and seem'd to say, " Again."
We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER.

And there
I found these cousins often by the brook
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw the fly;
The girls of equal age, but one was fair,
And one was dark, and both were beautiful.
No voice for either spoke within my heart
Then, for the surface eye, that only dotes
On outward beauty, glancing from the one
To the other, knew not that which pleased it most,
The raven ringlet or the gold; but both
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to walk
This terrace—morbid, melancholy; mine

And yet not mine the hall, the farm, the field;
For all that ample woodland whisper'd, "Debt,"
The brook that feeds this lakelet murmur'd, "Debt,"
And in yon arching avenue of old elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober rook
And carrion crow cry, "Mortgage."

MIRIAM.

Father's fault
Visited on the children!

FATHER.

Ay, but then
A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to Rome—
He left me wealth—and while I journey'd hence,
And saw the world fly by me like a dream,
And while I communed with my truest self,
I woke to all of truest in myself,
Till in the gleam of those midsummer dawns,
The form of Muriel faded, and the face
Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;
And past and future mixt in heaven and made
The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him who left you wealth,
Your kinsman?

The Ring

FATHER.

I had seen the man but once;
He loved my name, not me; and then I pass'd
Home, and thro' Venice, where a jeweller,
So far gone down, or so far up in life,
That he was nearing his own hundred, sold
This ring to me, then laugh'd, "The ring is weird."
And weird and worn and wizard-like was he.
"Why weird?" I ask'd him; and he said, "The souls
Of two repentant lovers guard the ring;"
Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak eyes—
"And if you give the ring to any maid,
They still remember what it cost them here,
And bind the maid to love you by the ring;
And if the ring were stolen from the maid,
The theft were death or madness to the thief,
So sacred those ghost lovers hold the gift."
And then he told their legend;

"Long ago
Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale
Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting sent
This ring, 'Io t' amo,' to his best beloved,
And sent it on her birthday. She in wrath
Return'd it on her birthday, and that day
His death-day, when, half-frenzied by the ring,
He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
The causer of that scandal, fought and fell;
And she that came to part them all too late,

And found a corpse and silence, drew the ring
From his dead finger, wore it till her death,
Shrined him within the temple of her heart,
Made every moment of her after life
A virgin victim to his memory,
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms, and cried,
'I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo.'"

MIRIAM.

Legend or true? so tender should be true!
Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

FATHER.

Ay!
But that half skeleton, like a barren ghost
From out the fleshless world of spirits, laugh'd—
A hollow laughter!

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost
Himself, to laugh at love in death! But you?

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this ring
Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I
Would call thro' this "Io t' amo" to the heart
Of Miriam; then I bade the man engrave
"From Walter" on the ring, and sent it—wrote

The Ring

Name, surname, all as clear as noon, but he—
Some younger hand must have engraven the ring—
His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost
Of seven and ninety winters, that he scrawl'd
A "Miriam" that might seem a "Muriel";
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I meant
For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted it
Before that other whom I loved and love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a minster there,
A galleried palace, or a battle-field,
Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but—coming home
And on your mother's birthday—all but yours—
A week betwixt—and when the tower as now
Was all ablaze with crimson to the roof,
And all ablaze too plunging in the lake
Head-foremost—who were those that stood between
The tower and that rich phantom of the tower?
Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and like
May-blossoms in mid-autumn—was it they?
A light shot upward on them from the lake.
What sparkled there? whose hand was that? they stood
So close together. I am not keen of sight,
But coming nearer—Muriel had the ring—
"O Miriam! have you given your ring to her?
O Miriam!" Miriam redden'd, Muriel clench'd
The hand that wore it, till I cried again:

" O Miriam, if you love me take the ring!"
She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was mute.
" Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be."
Then—Muriel standing ever statue-like—
She turn'd, and in her soft imperial way
And saying gently, " Muriel, by your leave,"
Unclosed the hand and from it drew the ring,
And gave it me, who pass'd it down her own,
" Io t' amo, all is well then." Muriel fled.

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel!

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel, when you hear
What follows! Miriam loved me from the first,
Not thro' the ring; but on her marriage-morn
This birthday, death-day, and betrothal ring,
Laid on her table overnight, was gone;
And after hours of search and doubt and threats,
And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it, "See!—
Found in a chink of that old moulder'd floor!"
My Miriam nodded with a pitying smile,
As who should say that "those who lose can find."
Then I and she were married for a year,
One year without a storm, or even a cloud;
And you, my Miriam, born within the year;
And she, my Miriam, dead within the year.

The Ring

I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:
" The books, the miniature, the lace are hers,
My ring too when she comes of age, or when
She marries; you—you loved me, kept your word.
You love me still, 'Io t' amo.'—Muriel—no—
She cannot love; she loves her own hard self,
Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Promise me,
Miriam, not Muriel—she shall have the ring."
And there the light of other life, which lives
Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,
Gleam'd for a moment in her own on earth.
I swore the vow, then with my latest kiss
Upon them, closed her eyes, which would not close,
But kept their watch upon the ring and you.
Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor mother!
And you, poor desolate father, and poor me,
The little senseless, worthless, wordless babe,
Saved when your life was wreck'd!

FATHER.

Desolate? yes!
Desolate as that sailor whom the storm
Had parted from his comrade in the boat,
And dash'd half dead on barren sands, was I.
Nay, you were my one solace; only—you
Were always ailing. Muriel's mother, sent,

And sure am I, by Muriel, one day came
And saw you, shook her head, and patted yours,
And smiled, and making with a kindly pinch
Each poor pale cheek a momentary rose—
"*That* should be fix'd," she said; "your pretty bud
So blighted here, would flower into full health
Among our heath and bracken. Let her come!
And we will feed her with our mountain air,
And send her home to you rejoicing." No—
We could not part. And once, when you, my girl,
Rode on my shoulder home—the tiny fist
Had grasp't a daisy from your mother's grave—
By the lych-gate was Muriel. " Ay," she said,
" Among the tombs in this damp vale of yours
You scorn my mother's warning, but the child
Is paler than before. We often walk
In open sun, and see beneath our feet
The mist of autumn gather from your lake,
And shroud the tower; and once we only saw
Your gilded vane, a light above the mist "—
Our old bright bird that still is veering there
Above his four gold letters—" and the light,"
She said, " was like that light "—and there she paused,
And long; till I, believing that the girl's
Lean fancy, groping for it, could not find
One likeness, laugh'd a little and found her two—
" A warrior's crest above the cloud of war "—

" A fiery phœnix rising from the smoke,
The pyre he burnt in."—" Nay," she said, " the light
That glimmers on the marsh and on the grave."
And spoke no more, but turn'd and past away.
Miriam, I am not surely one of those
Caught by the flower that closes on the fly,
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd intent,
In aiming at an all but hopeless mark
To strike it, struck. I took, I left you there;
I came, I went, was happier day by day;
For Muriel nursed you with a mother's care;
Till on that clear and heather-scented height
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into bloom.
She always came to meet me carrying you,
And all her talk was of the babe she loved;
So, following her old pastime of the brook,
She threw the fly for me; but oftener left
That angling to the mother. "Muriel's health
Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam. Strange
She used to shun the wailing babe, and dotes
On this of yours." But when the matron saw
That hinted love was only wasted bait,
Not risen to, she was bolder. " Ever since
You sent the fatal ring "—I told her " sent
To Miriam," " Doubtless—ay, but ever since
In all the world my dear one sees but you—
In your sweet babe she finds but you—she makes
Her heart a mirror that reflects but you."

And then the tear fell, the voice broke. *Her* heart!
I gazed into the mirror, as a man
Who sees his face in water, and a stone,
That glances from the bottom of the pool,
Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet at last,
Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep
So skilled a nurse about you always—nay!
Some half remorseful kind of pity too—
Well! well, you know I married Muriel Erne.
"I take thee Muriel for my wedded wife"—
I had forgotten it was your birthday, child—
When all at once with some electric thrill
A cold air pass'd between us, and the hands
Fell from each other, and were join'd again.
No second cloudless honeymoon was mine.
For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,
She dropt the gracious mask of motherhood,
She came no more to meet me, carrying you,
Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,
Nor ever ceased to clamour for the ring;
Why had I sent the ring at first to her?
Why had I made her love me thro' the ring,
And then had changed? so fickle are men—the best!
Not she—but now my love was hers again,
The ring by right, she said, was hers again.
At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,

" That weak and watery nature love you? No!
'*Io* t' amo, *Io* t' amo'!" flung herself
Against my heart, but often while her lips
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,
As from the grating of a sepulchre,
Past over both. I told her of my vow,
No pliable idiot I to break my vow;
But still she made her outcry for the ring;
For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,
Till I myself was madden'd with her cry,
And even that " Io t' amo," those three sweet
Italian words, became a weariness.
My people too were scared with eerie sounds,
A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,
A noise of falling weights that never fell,
Weird whispers, bells that rang without a hand,
Door-handles turn'd when none was at the door,
And bolted doors that open'd of themselves;
And one betwixt the dark and light had seen
Her, bending by the cradle of her babe.

MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked
By noises in the house—and no one near—
I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand
Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face
Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,

And I was quieted, and slept again.
Or is it some half memory of a dream?

FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM.

And the face,
The hand,—my mother.

FATHER.

Miriam, on that day
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale—
Mere want of gold—and still for twenty years
Bound by the golden cord of their first love—
Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to share
Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler then
Than ever you were in your cradle, moan'd,
" I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,
I cannot go, go you." And then she rose,
She clung to me with such a hard embrace,
So lingeringly long, that half-amazed
I parted from her, and I went alone.
And when the bridegroom murmur'd, " With this ring,"
I felt for what I could not find, the key,
The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.
I kept it as a sacred amulet
About me,—gone! and gone in that embrace!
Then, hurrying home, I found her not in house

Or garden—up the tower—an icy air
Fled by me.—There, the chest was open—all
The sacred relics tost about the floor—
Among them Muriel lying on her face—
I raised her, call'd her, "Muriel, Muriel, wake!"
The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed eye
Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I took
And chafed the freezing hand. A red mark ran
All round one finger pointed straight, the rest
Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—and maybe stung
With some remorse, had stolen, worn the ring—
Then torn it from her finger, or as if—
For never had I seen her show remorse—
As if—

MIRIAM.

—those two ghost lovers—

FATHER.

Lovers yet—

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes!

FATHER.

—but dead so long, gone up so far,
That now their ever-rising life has dwarf'd
Or lost the moment of their past on earth,
As we forget our wail at being born—
As if—

MIRIAM.

—a dearer ghost had—

FATHER.

—wrench'd it away.

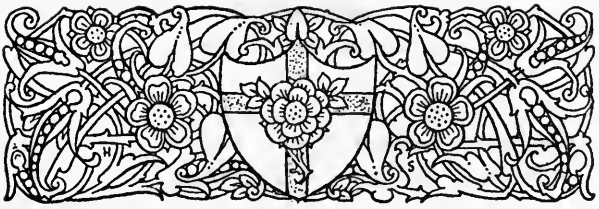
MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful eyes,
Till from her own hand she had torn the ring
In fright, and fallen dead. And I myself
Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER.

Well, no more!
No bridal music this! but fear not you!
You have the ring she guarded; that poor link
With earth is broken, and has left her free,
Except that, still drawn downward for an hour,
Her spirit hovering by the church, where she
Was married too, may linger, till she sees
Her maiden coming like a queen, who leaves
Some colder province in the North to gain
Her capital city, where the loyal bells
Clash welcome—linger, till her town, the babe
She lean'd to from her spiritual sphere,
Her lonely maiden princess, crowned with flowers,
Has enter'd on the larger woman-world
Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil—
Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me, child, and go.



Forlorn

I

"HE is fled—I wish him dead—
He that wrought my ruin—
O, the flattery and the craft
Which were my undoing—
In the night, in the night,
When the storms are blowing.

II

"Who was witness of the crime?
Who shall now reveal it?
He is fled, or he is dead,
Marriage will conceal it—
In the night, in the night,
While the gloom is growing."

III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
What is this you 're dreaming?
There is laughter down in hell
At your simple scheming—
In the night, in the night,
When the ghosts are fleeting.

IV

You to place a hand in his
Like an honest woman's,
You that lie with wasted lungs
Waiting for your summons—
In the night, O, the night!
O, the deathwatch beating!

V

There will come a witness soon
Hard to be confuted,
All the world will hear a voice
Scream you are polluted—
In the night! O, the night,
When the owls are wailing

VI

Shame and marriage, shame and marriage,
Fright and foul dissembling,

Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,
Tower and altar trembling—
In the night, O, the night,
When the mind is failing!

VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?
How your hand is shaking!
Daughter of the seed of Cain,
What is this you 're taking?—
In the night, O, the night,
While the house is sleeping.

VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,
O unhappy creature?
You that would not tread on a worm
For your gentle nature—
In the night, O, the night,
O, the night of weeping!

IX

Murder would not veil your sin,
Marriage will not hide it,
Earth and Hell will brand your name,
Wretch, you must abide it—
In the night, O, the night,
Long before the dawning.

x

Up, get up, and tell him all,
Tell him you were lying!
Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
You that know you 're dying—
In the night, O, the night,
While the grave is yawning.

xi

No—you will not die before,
Tho' you 'll ne'er be stronger;
You will live till *that* is born,
Then a little longer—
In the night, O, the night,
While the Fiend is prowling.

xii

Death and marriage, death and marriage!
Funeral hearses rolling!
Black with bridal favours mixt
Bridal bells with tolling!—
In the night, O, the night,
When the wolves are howling.

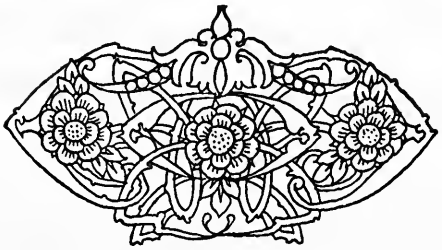
xiii

Up, get up, the time is short,
Tell him now or never!

Tell him all before you die,
  Lest you die for ever—
  In the night, O, the night,
  Where there 's no forgetting.

XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all,
  All her tale of sadness,
Blister'd every word with tears,
  And eased her heart of madness—
  In the night, and nigh the dawn,
  And while the moon was setting.



Happy

The Leper's Bride

I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what is it that you fear?
Is he sick, your mate, like mine? have you lost him, is he fled?
And there—the heron rises from his watch beside the mere,
And flies above the leper's hut, where lives the living-dead.

II

Come back, nor let me know it! would he live and die alone?
And has he not forgiven me yet, his over-jealous bride,

Who am, and was, and will be his, his own and only
own,
To share his living death with him, die with him side
by side?

III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,
Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and wears the
leper's weed?
The door is open. He! is he standing at the door,
My soldier of the Cross? it is he, and he indeed!

IV

My roses—will he take them *now*—mine, his—from
off the tree
We planted both together, happy in our marriage
morn?
O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought Thy fight for
Thee,
And Thou hast made him leper to compass him with
scorn—

V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the coward and the
base,
And set a crueller mark than Cain's on him, the
good and brave!

He sees me, waves me from him. I will front him face to face.
You need not wave me from you. I would leap into your grave.

. . . . . .

VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the conquering sword,
The roses that you cast aside—once more I bring you these.
No nearer? do you scorn me when you tell me, O my lord,
You would not mar the beauty of your bride with your disease.

VII

You say your body is so foul—then here I stand apart,
Who yearn to lay my loving head upon your leprous breast.
The leper plague may scale my skin, but never taint my heart;
Your body is not foul to me, and body is foul at best.

VIII

I loved you first when young and fair, but now I love you most;
The fairest flesh at last is filth on which the worm will feast;
This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy human ghost,
This house with all its hateful needs no cleaner than the beast,

IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which in Eden was divine,
This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city of sewers,
This wall of solid flesh that comes between your soul and mine,
Will vanish and give place to the beauty that endures,

X

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual height,
When we shall stand transfigured, like Christ on Hermon hill,
And moving each to music, soul in soul and light in light,
Shall flash thro' one another in a moment as we will.

XI

Foul! foul! the word was yours not mine, I worship
that right hand
Which fell'd the foes before you as the woodman
fells the wood,
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back the sun of
Holy Land,
And clove the Moslem crescent moon, and changed
it into blood.

XII

And once I worshipt all too well this creature of decay,
For age will chink the face, and death will freeze the
supplest limbs—
Yet you in your mid manhood—O, the grief when yes-
terday
They bore the Cross before you to the chant of
funeral hymns!

XIII

"Libera me, Domine!" you sang the Psalm, and when
The priest pronounced you dead, and flung the
mould upon your feet,
A beauty came upon your face, not that of living men,
But seen upon the silent brow when life has ceased
to beat.

XIV

"Libera *nos*, Domine"—you knew not one was there
Who saw you kneel beside your bier, and weeping scarce could see;
May I come a little nearer, I that heard, and changed the prayer
And sang the married "nos" for the solitary "me"?

XV

My beauty marred by you? by you! so be it. All is well
If I lose it and myself in the higher beauty, yours.
My beauty lured that falcon from his eyry on the fell,
Who never caught one gleam of the beauty which endures—

XVI

The Count who sought to snap the bond that link'd us life to life,
Who whisper'd me, "Your Ulric loves"—a little nearer still—
He hiss'd, "Let us revenge ourselves, your Ulric woos my wife"—
A lie by which he thought he could subdue me to his will.

XVII

I knew that you were near me when I let him kiss
my brow;
Did he touch me on the lips? I was jealous, anger'd,
vain,
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are you jealous of
me now?
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave you pain!

XVIII

You never once accused me, but I wept alone, and sigh'd
In the winter of the present for the summer of the
past;
That icy winter silence—how it froze you from your
bride,
Tho' I made one barren effort to break it at the last!

XIX

I brought you, you remember, these roses, when I knew
You were parting for the war, and you took them
tho' you frown'd;
You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them. All at once the
trumpet blew,
And you spurr'd your fiery horse, and you hurl'd
them to the ground.

XX

You parted for the Holy War without a word to me,
And clear myself unask'd—not I. My nature was too proud.
And him I saw but once again, and far away was he,
When I was praying in a storm—the crash was long and loud—

XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt from falling on your head—
Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming down the fell—
I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from heaven had dash'd him dead,
And sent him charr'd and blasted to the deathless fire of hell.

XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented and repent,
And trust myself forgiven by the God to whom I kneel.
A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be content
Till I be leper like yourself, my love, from head to heel.

XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would slight our marriage oath!
I held you at that moment even dearer than before;
Now God has made you leper in His loving care for both,
That we might cling together, never doubt each other more.

XXIV

The priest, who join'd you to the dead, has join'd our hands of old;
If man and wife be but one flesh, let mine be leprous too,
As dead from all the human race as if beneath the mould;
If you be dead, then I am dead, who only live for you.

XXV

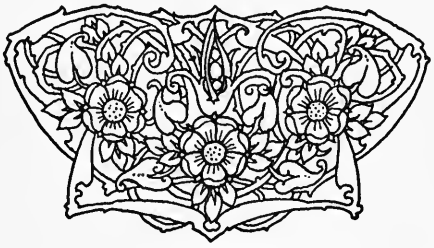
Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be follow'd by the Moon?
The leech forsake the dying bed for terror of his life?
The shadow leave the Substance in the brooding light of noon?
Or if *I* had been the leper would you have left the wife?

XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me off—poor roses—
must I go—
I have worn them year by year—from the bush we
both had set—
What? fling them to you?—well—that were hardly
gracious. No!
Your plague but passes by the touch. A little nearer
yet!

XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the priest; the priest is not
to blame,
He joins us once again, to his either office true.
I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss me. In the
name
Of the everlasting God, I will live and die with you!



To Ulysses[1]

I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
Whose eyes have known this globe of ours,
Her tribes of men, and trees, and flowers,
From Corrientes to Japan,

II

To you that bask below the Line,
I soaking here in winter wet—
The century's three strong eights have met
To drag me down to seventy-nine

III

In summer if I reach my day—
To you, yet young, who breathe the balm
Of summer-winters by the palm
And orange grove of Paraguay,

[1] "Ulysses," the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Montevideo before seeing my poem.

IV

I, tolerant of the colder time,
  Who love the winter woods, to trace
  On paler heavens the branching grace
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V

And see my cedar green, and there
  My giant ilex keeping leaf
  When frost is keen and days are brief—
Or marvel how in English air

VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,
  Altho' the months have scarce begun,
  Has push'd toward our faintest sun
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells—

VII

Or watch the waving pine which here
  The warrior of Caprera set,[1]
  A name that earth will not forget
Till earth has roll'd her latest year—

[1] Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, "I wish I had your trees."

VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light
On broader zones beyond the foam,
But chaining fancy now at home
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you
For your rich gift, your tale of lands
I know not,[1] your Arabian sands;
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bamboo,

X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake;
Your Oriental Eden-isles,[2]
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;
Your wonder of the boiling lake;[3]

XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,[4]
Phra-bat[5] the step; your Pontic coast;

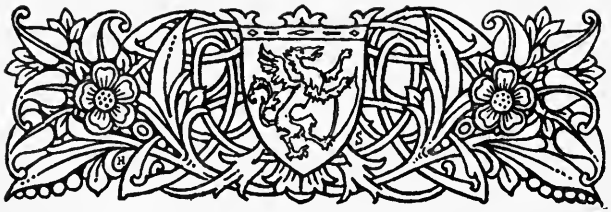
[1] The tale of Nejd. [2] The Philippines. [3] In Dominica.
[4] The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.
[5] The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

Crag-cloister;[1] Anatolian Ghost;[2]
Hong-Kong,[3] Karnac,[4] and all the rest;

XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
Your leading hand, and came, my friend,
To prize your various book, and send
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

[1] The monastery of Sumelas. [2] Anatolian spectre stories.
[3] The three cities. [4] Travels in Egypt.



To Mary Boyle

With the following Poem

I

"SPRING-FLOWERS"! While you still delay to take
Your leave of town,
Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-flake
Is fluttering down.

II

Be truer to your promise. There! I heard
Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

To Mary Boyle

III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum chain
Drop to the grass.

IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to rest,
Dead with the dead?
For ere she left us, when we met, you prest
My hand, and said,

V

"I come with your spring-flowers." You came not, friend;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring-flower I send,
This song of spring,

VI

Found yesterday—forgotten mine own rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf—

To Mary Boyle

VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the whitening sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years ago,
In rick-fire days,

VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and paced his land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the height
By tonguester tricks,
And once—I well remember that red night
When thirty ricks,

X

All flaming, made an English homestead hell—
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the well
Along the line,

To Mary Boyle

XI

When this bare dome had not begun to gleam
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy dream,
His girl of girls;

XII

And you, that now are lonely, and with Grief
Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of relief
In change of place.

XIII

What use to brood? This life of mingled pains
And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed, remains
The Mystery.

XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend, the wife,
For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro' desert life
Without the one.

To Mary Boyle

XV

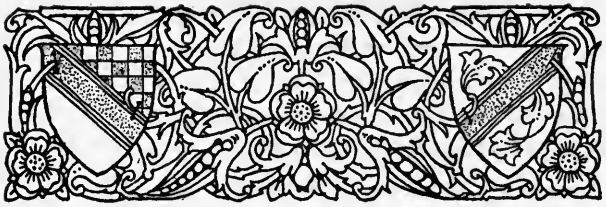
The silver year should cease to mourn and sigh—
Not long to wait—
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I
To that dim gate.

XVI

Take, read! and be the faults your Poet makes
Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music wakes
A wish in you

XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her realm
Of sound and smoke,
For his clear heaven, and these few lanes of elm
And whispering oak.



The Progress of Spring

I

THE ground-flame of the crocus breaks the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the Southern sea,
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop cold
That trembles not to kisses of the bee.
Come, Spring, for now from all the dripping eaves
The spear of ice has wept itself away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine leaves
O'er his uncertain shadow droops the day.
She comes! The loosen'd rivulets run;
The frost-bead melts upon her golden hair;
Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her bare
To breaths of balmier air;

II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to welcome her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek the jays,

The Progress of Spring

Before her skims the jubilant woodpecker
  The linnet's bosom blushes at her gaze,
While round her brows a woodland culver flits,
  Watching her large light eyes and gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon sits
  Patient—the secret splendour of the brooks.
Come, Spring! She comes on waste and wood,
  On farm and field; but enter also here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my blood,
  And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
  Lodge with me all the year!

III

Once more a downy drift against the brakes,
  Self-darken'd in the sky, descending slow!
But gladly see I thro' the wavering flakes
  Yon blanching apricot like snow in snow.
These will thine eyes not brook in forest-paths,
  On their perpetual pine, nor round the beech;
They fuse themselves to little spicy baths,
  Solved in the tender blushes of the peach;
They lose themselves and die
  On that new life that gems the hawthorn line;
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them by,
  And out once more in varnish'd glory shine
  Thy stars of celandine.

The Progress of Spring

IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven lours,
  But in the tearful splendour of her smiles.
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut towers
  Fill out the spaces by the barren tiles.
Now past her feet the swallow circling flies,
  A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet her hand;
Her light makes rainbows in my closing eyes,
  I hear a charm of song thro' all the land.
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth is glad
  To roll her North below thy deepening dome,
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly clad,
  And these low bushes dip their twigs in foam,
  Make all true hearths thy home.

V

Across my garden! and the thicket stirs,
  The fountain pulses high in sunnier jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle purrs,
  The starling claps his tiny castanets.
Still round her forehead wheels the woodland dove,
  And scatters on her throat the sparks of dew,
The kingcup fills her footprint, and above
  Broaden the glowing isles of vernal blue
Hail, ample presence of a Queen,
  Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glancing green,

Flies back in fragrant breezes to display
A tunic white as May!

VI

She whispers, "From the South I bring you balm,
For on a tropic mountain was I born,
While some dark dweller by the coco-palm
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with airy morn;
From under rose a muffled moan of floods;
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;
There no one came, the turf was fresh, the woods,
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their vales below.
I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scarlet cranes,
The slant seas leaning on the mangrove copse,
And summer basking in the sultry plains
About a land of canes.

VII

"Then from my vapour-girdle soaring forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of the birds,
And drank the dews and drizzle of the North,
That I might mix with men, and hear their words
On pathway'd plains; for—while my hand exults
Within the bloodless heart of lowly flowers
To work old laws of Love to fresh results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple powers—
I too would teach the man

Beyond the darker hour to see the bright,
That his fresh life may close as it began,
The still-fulfilling promise of a light
Narrowing the bounds of night."

VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may mark
The coming year's great good and varied ills,
And new developments, whatever spark
Be struck from out the clash of warring wills;
Or whether, since our nature cannot rest,
The smoke of war's volcano burst again
From hoary deeps that belt the changeful West,
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings of men;
Or should those fail that hold the helm,
While the long day of knowledge grows and warms,
And in the heart of this most ancient realm
A hateful voice be utter'd, and alarms
Sounding "To arms! to arms!"

IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn
Who reads thy gradual process, Holy Spring.
Thy leaves possess the season in their turn,
And in their time thy warblers rise on wing.

The Progress of Spring

How surely glidest thou from March to May,
  And changest, breathing it, the sullen wind,
Thy scope of operation, day by day,
  Larger and fuller, like the human mind!
Thy warmths from bud to bud
  Accomplish that blind model in the seed,
And men have hopes, which race the restless blood,
  That after many changes may succeed
  Life which is Life indeed.

Merlin and the Gleam

I

O YOUNG Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The grey Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow the Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!

Merlin and the Gleam

Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated the Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd,
"Follow the Gleam."

IV

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at

Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted the Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plough-land,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labour,
Slided the Gleam—

VI

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the King;
Touch'd at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flash'd on the tournament,
Flicker'd and bicker'd
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested the Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanish'd
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow

And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with the Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang thro' the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came—

And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For thro' the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.

Romney's Remorse

"BEAT, little heart—I give you this and this."
Who are you? What! the Lady Hamilton?
Good, I am never weary painting you.
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe, Joan,
Or spinning at your wheel beside the vine—
Bacchante, what you will; and if I fail
To conjure and concentrate into form
And colour all you are, the fault is less
In me than Art. What artist ever yet
Could make pure light live on the canvas? Art!
Why should I so disrelish that short word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills! so hot,
So fever'd! never colt would more delight
To roll himself in meadow grass than I
To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired ? or came of your own will

Romney's Remorse

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?
Have I not met you somewhere long ago?
I am all but sure I have—in Kendal church—
O, yes! I hired you for a season there,
And then we parted; but you look so kind
That you will not deny my sultry throat
One draught of icy water. There—you spill
The drops upon my forehead. Your hand shakes.
I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,
Could kneel for your forgiveness. Are they tears?
For me—they do me too much grace—for me?
O Mary, Mary!
Vexing you with words!
Words only, born of fever, or the fumes
Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,—words,
Wild babble. I have stumbled back again
Into the common day, the sounder self.
God stay me there, if only for your sake,
The truest, kindliest, noblest-hearted wife
That ever wore a Christian marriage-ring.

My curse upon the Master's apothegm,
That wife and children drag an artist down!
This seem'd my lodestar in the heaven of Art,
And lured me from the household fire on earth.
To you my days have been a lifelong lie,
Grafted on half a truth; and tho' you say,
"Take comfort you have won the painter's fame,"

Romney's Remorse

The best in me that sees the worst in me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort there.

What fame? I am not Raphael, Titian,—no,
Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
Wrong there! The painter's fame? but mine, that grew
Blown into glittering by the popular breath,
May float awhile beneath the sun, may roll
The rainbow hues of heaven about it—
There!
The colour'd bubble bursts above the abyss
Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?
Her sad eyes plead for my own fame with me
To make it dearer.

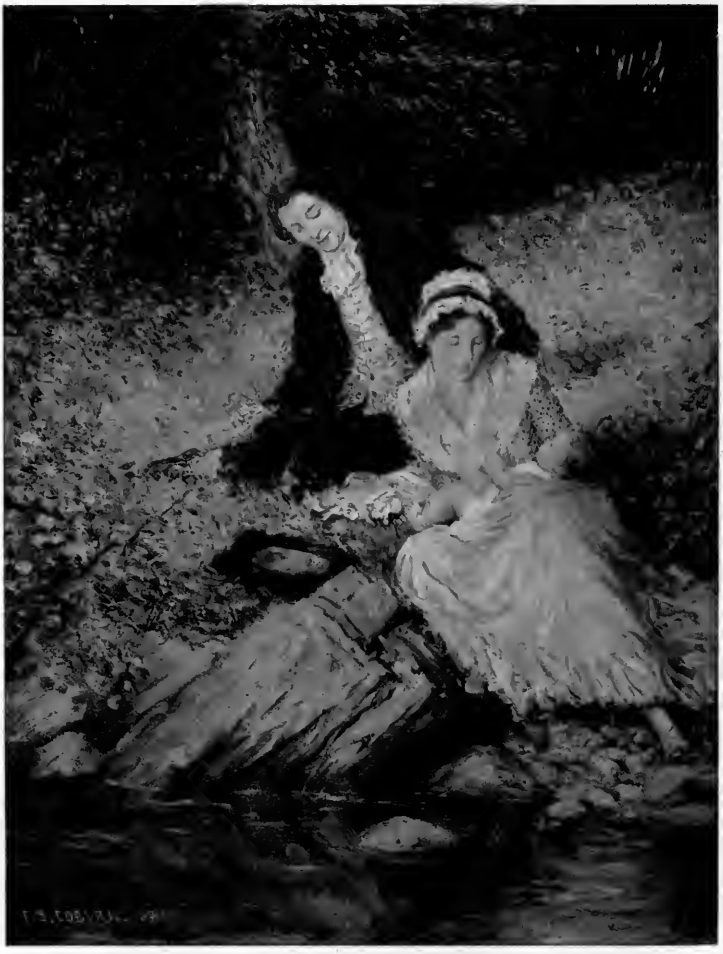
Look, the sun has risen
To flame along another dreary day.
Your hand. How bright you keep your marriage-ring!
Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
Bred this black mood? or am I conscious, more
Than other Masters, of the chasm between
Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom of age
And suffering cloud the height I stand upon
Even from myself? stand? stood—no more.

And yet
The world would lose, if such a wife as you
Should vanish unrecorded. Might I crave
One favour? I am bankrupt of all claim
On your obedience, and my strongest wish
Falls flat before your least unwillingness.
Still, would you—if it please you—sit to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear summer noon,
When seated on a rock, and foot to foot
With your own shadow in the placid lake,
You claspt our infant daughter, heart to heart.
I had been among the hills, and brought you down
A length of staghorn-moss, and this you twined
About her cap. I see the picture yet,
Mother and child. A sound from far away,
No louder than a bee among the flowers,
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.
You still'd it for the moment with a song
Which often echo'd in me, while I stood
Before the great Madonna-masterpieces
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.
You should have been—I might have made you once,
Had I but known you as I know you now—
The true Alcestis of the time. Your song—
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof
That I—even I—at times remember'd *you*.



Romney's Remorse

"Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!
Beat upon mine! you are mine, my sweet!
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your feet,
My sweet."

Less profile! turn to me—three-quarter face.

"Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss!
For I give you this, and I give you this!
And I bind your pretty blue eyes with a kiss!
Sleep!"

Too early blinded by the kiss of death—

"Father and Mother will watch you grow"—

You watch'd, not I; she did not grow, she died.

"Father and Mother will watch you grow,
And gather the roses wherever they blow,
And find the white heather wherever you go,
My sweet."

Ah, my white heather only blooms in heaven
With Milton's amaranth. There, there, there! a child
Had shamed me at it—Down, you idle tools,
Stampt into dust—tremulous, all awry,
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled pool,—
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that harlot-like
Seduced me from you, leaves me harlot-like,
Who love her still, and whimper, impotent

Romney's Remorse

To win her back before I die—and then—
Then, in the loud world's bastard judgment-day,
One truth will damn me with the mindless mob,
Who feel no touch of my temptation, more
Than all the myriad lies that blacken round
The corpse of every man that gains a name;
" This model husband, this fine artist!" Fool,
What matters? Six foot deep of burial mould
Will dull their comments! Ay, but when the shout
Of His descending peals from heaven, and throbs
Thro' earth and all her graves, if *He* should ask,
" Why left you wife and children? for my sake,
According to my word?" and I replied,
"Nay, Lord, for *Art*," why, that would sound so mean
That all the dead, who wait the doom of hell
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders,—nay the ruthless Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung harem in the sea,
Would turn, and glare at me, and point and jeer,
And gibber at the worm who, living, made
The wife of wives a widow-bride, and lost
Salvation for a sketch.
I am wild again!
The coals of fire you heap upon my head
Have crazed me. Some one knocking there without?
No! Will my Indian brother come? to find
Me or my coffin? Should I know the man?
This worn-out Reason dying in her house

May leave the windows blinded, and if so,
Bid him farewell for me, and tell him—
Hope!
I hear a death-bed angel whisper, "Hope."
"The miserable have no medicine—
But only hope!" He said it—in the play.
His crime was of the senses; of the mind
Mine—worse, cold, calculated.
Tell my son—
O, let me lean my head upon your breast.
"Beat, little heart" on this fool brain of mine.
I once had friends—and many—none like you.
I love you more than when we married. Hope!
O, yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—
For you forgive me, you are sure of that—
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

Parnassus

Exegi monumentum . . .
Quod non . . .
Possit diruere . . .
. . . innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum.

HORACE.

I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over the sacred fountain?
Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised to the heights of the mountain,
And over the flight of the Ages! O Goddesses, help me up thither!
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar, but mine would not wither.
Steep is the mountain, but you, you will help me to overcome it,

And stand with my head in the zenith, and roll my voice from the summit,
Sounding for ever and ever thro' Earth and her listening nations,
And mixt with the great sphere-music of stars and of constellations.

II

What be those two shapes high over the sacred fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all the mountain?
On those two known peaks they stand ever spreading and heightening;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by more than lightning!
Look, in their deep double shadow the crown'd ones all disappearing!
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for a deathless hearing!
"Sounding for ever and ever?" pass on! the sight confuses—
These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible Muses!

III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer greatly care?

Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him
would not falter;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer
there.

By an Evolutionist

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord—"Not yet; but make it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of morning shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my stable,
Youth and health, and birth and wealth, and choice of women and of wines?

By an Evolutionist

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save breaking my bones on the rack?
Would I had past in the morning that looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was linkt with thee eighty years back.
Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs on a star.

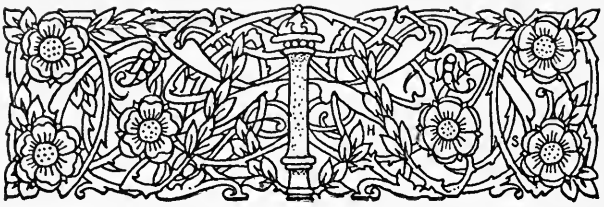
I

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy province of the brute.

II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,
Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,

But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet
at last,
As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse
of a height that is higher.



Far—Far—Away

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
Far—far—away.

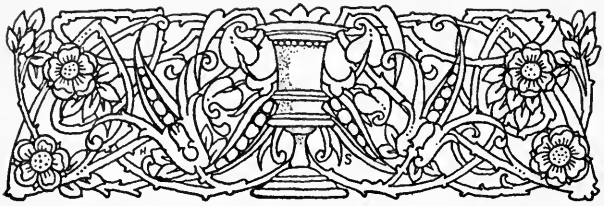
What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt him when a boy,
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
Far—far—away?

Far—Far—Away

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
Far—far—away?



Politics

WE move, the wheel must always move,
Nor always on the plain,
And if we move to such a goal
As Wisdom hopes to gain,
Then you that drive, and know your craft,
Will firmly hold the rein,
Nor lend an ear to random cries,
Or you may drive in vain;
For some cry " Quick " and some cry "Slow,"
But while the hills remain,
Up hill " Too-slow " will need the whip,
Down hill " Too-quick " the chain.

Beautiful City

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater of European confusion,
O you with your passionate shriek for the rights of an equal humanity,
How often your Re-volution has proven but E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides of a civic insanity!

The Roses on the Terrace

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in your May,
Two words, "*My* Rose," set all your face aglow,
And now that I am white and you are grey,
That blush of fifty years ago, my dear,
Blooms in the past, but close to me to-day,
As this red rose, which on our terrace here
Glows in the blue of fifty miles away.

F.S.COBURN

The Play

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
In some fifth act what this wild Drama means.

On One Who Affected an Effeminate Manner

WHILE man and woman still are incomplete,
I prize that soul where man and woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man.

To One Who Ran Down the English

YOU make our faults too gross, and thence maintain
Our darker future. May your fears be vain!
At times the small black fly upon the pane
May seem the black ox of the distant plain.

The Snowdrop

MANY, many welcomes,
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid!

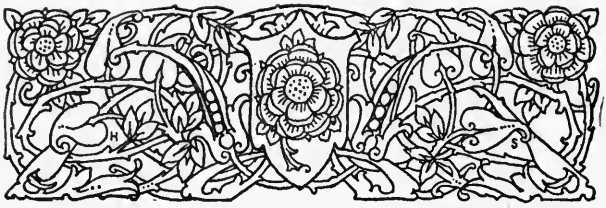
The Throstle

"SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again!"
Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then *so* new
That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
And all the winters are hidden.



The Oak

LIVE thy Life,
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold;

Summer-rich
Then; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
Gold again.

All his leaves
Fall'n at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
Naked strength.

In Memoriam

W. G. Ward

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I shall not find,
Whose Faith and Work were bells of full accord,
My friend, the most unworldly of mankind,
Most generous of all Ultramontanes, Ward,
How subtle at tierce and quart of mind with mind,
How loyal in the following of thy Lord!

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